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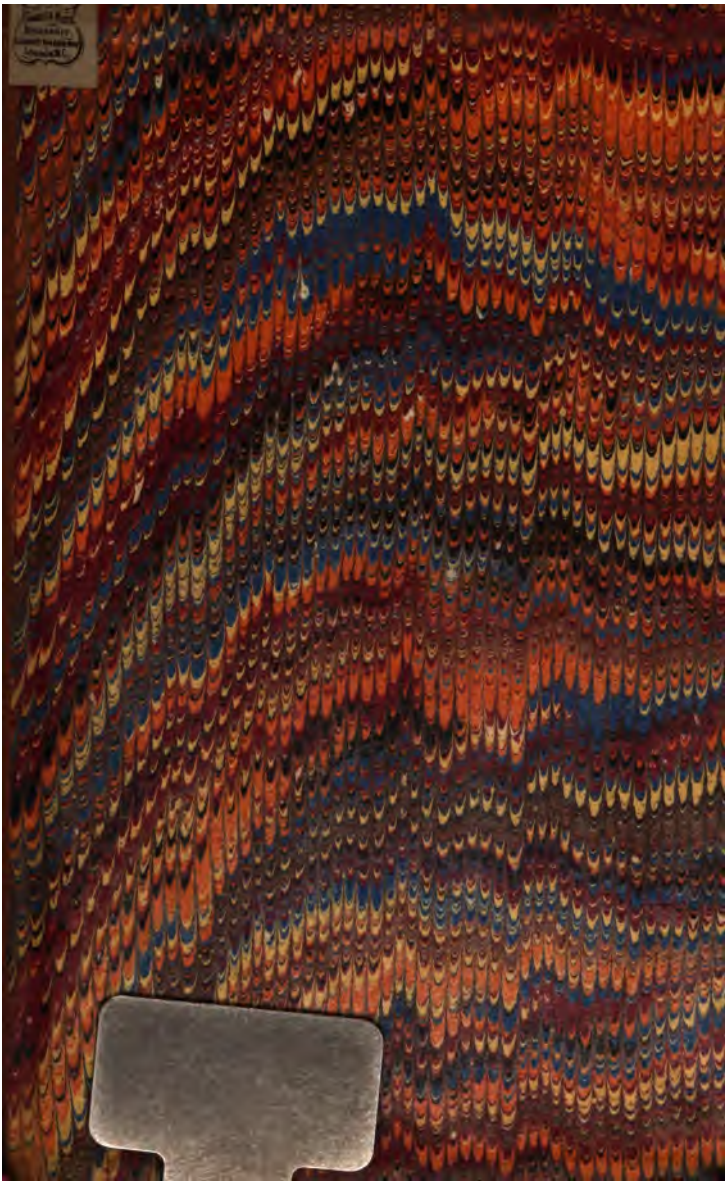

MEMOIRS

OF THE LATE

REV. JOHN WESLEY, A. M.

WITH A REVIEW OF HIS

LIFE AND WRITINGS,

AND A

HISTORY OF METHODISM,

From it's Commencement in 1729, to the present time.

BY JOHN HAMPSON, A. B.

VOL. III.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Executors of Mr Weſley, having taken much pains, by notices and advertiſements, to prevent the circulation of theſe Memoirs, or any other account of Mr Weſley, than that which they are now preparing, and which is to be ſigned by their names, the Public are reſpectfully informed, that the Rev. Dr. PRIESTLEY, in a letter to a near relation of the Author, has authenticated the correſpondence between the Weſleys, which is ſo frequently alluded to, in theſe pages: which authentification is gratefully acknowledged, and would have been inſerted before the preface, had it not come too late for publication. This correſpondence was not in Mr Weſley's poſſeſſion; conſequently is not to be found among his papers.—Whether the account the Executors ſhall publiſh, will be found "ſpurious and haſty" or not, it is too ſoon to determine. It is hoped, however, nothing of this ſort will ſtrike the judicious reader in the preſent work. Should their account be an impartial one, it is more than the world expects: and in this caſe, we ſhall certainly be not a little diſappointed.

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MEMOIRS

OF THE

REV. JOHN WESLEY, A. M.

CHAP. I.

PROGRESS OF METHODISM IN AMERICA CONTINUED.

ON the arrival of Dr Coke in America, in 1784, he found the ſocieties in a flouriſhing ſtate, and conſiderably increaſed in number. One of his firſt efforts abroad, was in favour of the ſlaves; and it was determined in conference to endeavour the final abolition

of their captivity. The cauſe was certainly a good one; for it was the cauſe of juſtice and humanity. But it was a delicate ſubject; and to manage it with effect, required not only a degree of zeal, but a large proportion of dexterity and judgment: which indeed muſt always be the caſe, where intereſt is concerned.

It is true, nothing can compenſate the loſs of liberty; nor is any conſideration of expediency or public utility competent to ſanctify the violation of juſtice and the rights of men. The only palliation of ſlavery (for it's vindication were impoſſible) muſt be found in the kind, generous behaviour of their maſters. It is well known, that the condition of ſlaves is not uniformly the ſame. It varies according to the temper of the owner, and may be compared to that of ſubjects in an abſolute government; very tolerable,

where the ſovereign is a man of wiſdom and benevolence; but if a tyrant, miſerable in the extreme. The ſituation of ſlaves under ſome maſters is, in point of comfort, ſuperior to that of the labouring poor in Britain: and as this was the caſe with many of thoſe, among whom the preachers laboured in America, we cannot entirely approve the expreſſions of their zeal, which, in ſome inſtances, almoſt amounted to intolerance. One of their leaders, when preaching the funeral ſermon of a gentleman and a brother, obſerves, that he "did not ſay any good of him," becauſe in this buſineſs he had been a thorn in his ſide; not conſidering, that it is poſſible his character might have been truly excellent, notwithſtanding this difference of judgment. Public perſons have often occaſion to be reminded of the advice of Hamlet to the play-

ers *; and to be admoniſhed that, conſtituted as human nature is, gentleneſs and courteſy will do infinitely more toward the accompliſhment of a favourite project, than any of thoſe clumſy, fulminating meaſures, which are beneath a man of ability and diſcernment, and which ignorance and raſhneſs alone are capable of adopting. We have no doubt, that zeal in a good cauſe, and under proper direction, is virtue; but we know too, that there are caſes, in which it is a curſe, as well to it's poſſeſſor, as to thoſe who ſuffer from it's unſeaſonable exploſions. Much zeal and little diſcernment, are the genuine characteriſtics of a Marplot.

The exertions of Dr Coke and his brethren, in the cauſe of liberty, were ſometimes attended with diſagreeable ef-

* "Uſe all gently."

ſects. Some offence was the natural conſequence of a tender point, not handled in the moſt delicate manner: and more than once his perſon was in danger. Several riots were excited: and one lady offered "the rioters fifty pounds, if they would give that little Doctor one hundred laſhes." But the Doctor was in luck. Some of his friends were of the church militant: and a ſtrapping colonel interpoſing, the vapulation did not take place. Above all, ſeveral were induced to comply with his exhortations, and a few ſlaves were emancipated.

The employment of the preachers on the continent was laborious; though perhaps it had it's agreements: for it has been obſerved, that few, who have gone over, have thought proper to return. In the courſe of the day, they frequently rode twenty or thirty miles through the

wilderneſs, preaching twice or thrice, and ſometimes to conſiderable congregations. Their excurſions, through immenſe foreſts, abounding in trees of all ſorts and ſizes, were often highly romantic. Innumerable rivers and falls of water; viſtas opening to the view, in contraſt with the uncultivated wild; deer now ſhooting acroſs the road, and now ſcouring through the woods; while the eye was frequently relieved by the appearance of orchards and plantations, and the houſes of gentlemen and farmers peeping through the trees, formed a ſcenery ſo various and pictureſque, as to produce a variety of reflection, and preſent, we will not ſay, to a philoſophic eye, but to the mind of every reaſonable creature, the moſt ſublime and agreeable images.

Their worſhip partook of the general ſimplicity. It was frequently conducted in the open air. The woods reſounded to the voice of the preacher, or to the ſinging of his numerous congregations; while their horſes, faſtened to the trees, formed a ſingular addition to the ſolemnity. It was indeed a ſtriking picture; and might naturally impreſs the mind with a retroſpect of the antediluvian days, when the hills and vallies re-echoed the patriarchal devotions, and a Sheth or an Enoſh, in the ſhadow of a projecting rock, or beneath the foliage of ſome venerable oak, delivered his primeval lectures, and was a "preacher of righteouſneſs" to the people.

Among other agreements, may be reckoned the American hoſpitality, the conſciouſneſs of being well employed, and the ſatisfaction reſulting from conſiderations

of public utility. As many of the preachers were men of fervent piety, this reflection would have it's full weight; and the inſtruction of the ignorant, and the reformation of the profligate, would be conſidered as the beſt recompence of their labours. Spreading themſelves through the continent, they took in Nova Scotia, Georgia, with the principal places iu both the Carolinas, Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, Penſylvania, New Jerſey, and New York, and numbering upwards of forty-three thouſand members of ſociety, excluſive of about eighty itinerants, and a conſiderable number of local preachers, who took no circuits, but aſſiſted occaſionally, in the neighbourhood of their reſpective reſidence.

The coloniſts, in the infancy of methodiſm, conducted themſelves with more propriety than our own countrymen,

There was little or no perſecution, nor any thing like a riot, except in one or two inſtances, which have been mentioned, as the conſequence of the animadverſions on ſlavery; and even theſe were productive of no miſchief. Not a creature was materially injured; no bones were broken, nor any lives loſt; which was not the caſe in this country. Here many thouſands of innocent people were ſubject to the groſſeſt indignities, and ſeveral were eventually ſacrificed to the fury of their perſecutors.

While we commend the Americans for their behaviour, in oppoſition to the brutality of the Engliſh mobs, it may be proper to enquire into the ſources of this diſtinction. Something of this may have ariſen from ſimilarity of ſentiment. The Americans, from the firſt beginnings of colonization, had been accuſtomed to the

doctrines of the old puritans and non-conformiſts, which, in many reſpects, have a near affinity to the methodiſtic tenets. The origin of methodiſm in America was ſeldom, if ever attended, either under the diſcourſes of Mr Whitefield, or Mr Weſley's preachers, with the ridiculous effects with which it was accompanied in theſe kingdoms. Moſt of the preachers, who went over to the continent, having laboured for ſome years in Europe, previous to their croſſing the water, had exhauſted their wild-fire: ſo that their diſcourſes were more ſcriptural and rational than thoſe of the primitive methodiſts. Another reaſon may be found in the education of the Americans. As a people, they are better cultivated than the body of the Engliſh. They are chiefly compoſed of merchants and a reſpectable yeomanry: and

there is but a ſmall proportion of that claſs, ſo ſuper-abundant here, which we diſtinguiſh by the term *mob.*

The only exception we have heard, to their exemption from the extravagancies, which in this country marked the infancy of methodiſm, is a cuſtom they have introduced in Maryland and Virginia. Frequently, at the concluſion of a ſermon, the whole congregation begin to "pray and to praiſe God aloud." The uproar this muſt create, may eaſily be conceived. Some, we are told, are great admirers of this ſpecies of enthuſiaſm, in which every man is his own miniſter, and one ſings and another prays with the moſt diſcordant devotion. But we will not dignify ſuch indecency with ſuch a name. It's proper appellation is fanaticiſm. We hope that, for the future, religion will never appear in this coun-

try under ſo odious a form; and greatly is it to be lamented, that, among the friends of chriſtianity, any ſuch abſurdities ſhould ariſe, to furniſh infidels with occaſions of triumph. Some people will never comprehend the diſtinction: but it is nevertheleſs true, that there is an immenſe gulph between religion and enthuſiaſm.

The generoſity of the coloniſts kept pace with their liberality. The large and expenſive buildings, which they have erected for public worſhip, almoſt exceed credibility: and ſeveral colleges are founded for the inſtruction of youth. How far the propoſed plan, of uniting "genuine religion and extenſive learning," will be carried into effect, time only can diſcover. It muſt materially depend on the character of the preſidents and tutors, and the proviſion that ſhall

be made for their ſupport. Men of real erudition will never be procured at low ſalaries; and it is in vain to attempt eſtabliſhments of this ſort, without a liberal proviſion for the profeſſors in every branch of ſcience. Two of theſe places are called Cokeſbury and Weſley College. How they are endowed, or whether they propoſe to obtain authority to confer degrees, we are not informed. But perhaps they are rather ſchools than colleges: which indeed is a circumſtance to be wiſhed, as good grammar ſchools are of the utmoſt ſervice to the progreſs of literature.

From the continent Mr Weſley turned his attention to the Weſt India Iſlands. In ſome of theſe, his way had been prepared by the moravians; and ſeveral preachers being ſent from the Engliſh conference in 1786, they preſently form-

ed ſocieties in Barbadoes, St. Vincent's, Dominica, St. Chriſtopher's, Nevis, Antigua, St. Euſtatius, Tortola, and St. Croix, which, in 1790, amounted to near five thouſand members. The number at this period, on the continent and in the iſlands, was forty eight thouſand, three hundred, and two, and the whole number in Europe and America, upwards of one hundred and twenty thouſand, including three huudred and eighty itinerants, and thirteen or fourteen hundred local preachers. On the continent, the white people conſiderably exceeded the negroes: in the Weſt Indies, the latter were ſuperior by a large proportion. The character of the Weſt Indians is well known. But it is worth obſerving, that the ſubjection of the negroes, and the obedience in which they are trained, muſt in-

culcate a docility, peculiarly favourable to the purpoſes of a miſſion.

Some of the miſſionaries have lately found their way to the Caribs, at St. Vincent's, which, it may be preſumed, will be advantageous to the planters; and, by preſerving a good underſtanding, will, in all probability, be the means of putting an end to the differences that have ſo long ſubſiſted among them.

This people is divided into the black and yellow Caribs; the former being the deſcendants of the cargo of a Guinea ſhip, wrecked on one of the Granadilloes; the latter, the aborigines of the iſland. The martial ſpirit of theſe Indians, their contentions with the gentlemen of the iſland, and their perpetual quarrels with each other, have been long before the public. It is ſaid, their morals are greatly corrupted, and their diſaffection to the

Engliſh government much increaſed by their intercourſe with Martinique. Of their ferocious character, a tolerable idea may be conveyed, by obſerving, that they conſtantly carry a ſabre or cutlaſs, and generally a loaded muſket, which is ever on the cock; for, ſo numerous are the broils of theſe people, that they are in conſtant dread of meeting an enemy. The conſequence is, that aſſaſſinations are frequent, and their cordial and eternal animoſities are piouſly tranſmitted from generation to generation.

At preſent, ſome ſchools are eſtabliſhed among them, in which their children are carefully inſtructed in the principles of religion. This mode of inſtruction will be found full as uſeful as their public miniſtrations; and heartily do we wiſh them ſucceſs.

In January 1789, Dr Coke paid a viſit to Jamaica, and gave them ſeveral ſermons. As he made but a ſhort ſtay, it could hardly be conſidered as a fair trial. Should a miſſion be eſtabliſhed here, as well as in the other iſlands, which will probably be the caſe, it is hoped, it will be the means of correcting one vice at leaſt; and that is duelling. A ſavage relic of Gothic barbarity, by which all the iſlands have for many years been diſtinguiſhed. Perhaps too, it will give ſome check to the ſpirit of luxury and diſſipation; and teach the planters, if it be found impracticable to emancipate their ſlaves, at leaſt to treat them with humanity.

Among other ſchemes, for the propagation of methodiſm, it was debated in conference, whether it would not be proper to ſend miſſionaries to the Eaſt In-

dies and to the coaſt of Africa: but it appearing that there was no invitation from any who reſided there, nor the leaſt probability of ſucceſs, this propoſal was dropt. The laſt miſſion in which they have engaged, is conducted by the conference in America, and is directed to a ſettlement called Kentucke, on the banks of the Ohio, and on the borders of the Indian territories, near the Miſſiſſippi: and, in ſpite of the Indian tomahawks, ſeveral offered and were accepted for this dangerous ſervice; which, at that time, was more ſo than uſual, on account of a war then ſubſiſting with this ſingular people. Whether theſe ſavages will ever chuſe to become tame, is a queſtion, the deciſion of which muſt be left to thoſe unfolders of all myſteries, time and experience. What may be the talents of the preachers, and how far they are

qualified for ſuch a ſervice, it is not for us to ſay. If they poſſeſs not much kno w-ledge, which however we do not know to be the caſe, it is at leaſt certain, they are not deficient in zeal: and, with-out any paſſionate deſire to imitate their example, we may at leaſt commend their endeavours for the general good. Every good man will contemplate, with plea-ſure, the operation of the ſpirit of refor-mation, whether foreign or domeſtic; and will rejoice in every attempt to pro-pagate chriſtianity in the barbarous parts of the world. An attempt, which, if in any tolerable degree ſucceſsful, will do infinitely more for their civilization and happineſs, than all the united energies of thoſe boaſted benefactors of mankind, the philoſophic infidels.

CHAP. II.

Observations on the Origin and Progress of Methodism.

IT has been ſhewn, that the foundations of methodiſm were laid at Oxford, in 1729; and about five or ſix years previous to Mr Whitefield's introduction to the original methodiſts. Some of the followers of this gentleman have ſuppoſed, becauſe he began the practice of field-preaching, that he was the father of methodiſm, and that Mr Weſley, to uſe the elegant language of a living author, was "his quondam underſtrapper." But this is not accurate. Mr Whitefield was introduced to the ſociety at Oxford

by Mr Wesley; and it was not itinerancy, or preaching in the open air, that gave rise either to the name of methodism, or to the thing; but rather the strict and regular deportment of a few gentlemen, who were united, at the university, in the same pursuits. Their first meetings, except on Sunday evenings, were rather literary than religious; and their chief reading was the classics. In a little time, they applied these meetings chiefly to religious purposes: when their regular and exemplary conduct first gave them the name of methodists. On this subject the authority of Mr Wesley is decisive; who explains it in these words: "The regularity of their behaviour gave occasion to a young gentleman of the college to say, 'I think we have got a new set of methodists,' alluding to a set of physicians, who began to flourish at

Rome about the time of Nero, and continued for ſeveral ages. The name was new and quaint. It clave to them immediately; and from that time, both theſe four young gentlemen, and all that had any religious connexion with them, were diſtinguiſhed by the name of methodiſts."

Dr Trapp has obſerved, that when he ſaw Mr Law's writings, he thought theſe books would certainly do miſchief; and the methodiſts appearing about that time, he conſidered this gentleman as their parent. Dr Warburton conſiders them as the offſpring of Mr Law and Count Zinzendorf: while Mr Weſley dates his firſt religious impreſſions at Oxford from his acquaintance with the writings of Dr Taylor. The fact is, that all theſe writers had their influence: though in the genius and doctrines of methodiſm, we

ſee more diſtinct traits of moravianiſm, if not myſticiſm, than of the more ſober divinity of Dr Taylor; whom ſome moderns have branded with pelagianiſm.

It ſeems to have been the general opinion, that Mr Weſley had determined, while at Oxford, to place himſelf at the head of a ſect, and had projected his plan, long before it's execution, in the commencement of itinerancy, and the other deviations from the eſtabliſhment. The motto, in one of his prints, which is ſuppoſed to have had a myſtical, as well as a literal meaning; his ſudden departure from the univerſity, his voyage to America, and his journey to Germany, have concurred, with other circumſtances, to confirm many in this opinion.

Some have inferred the ſame thing, from contraſting his ſprightlineſs in youth

with the peculiar ſtrictneſs, which followed his ſudden change of principles. It is ſaid, that in early life, he was of the ſprightlieſt temper, "a moſt ſenſible and acute collegian, baffling every opponent by the ſubtilties of logic, and laughing at them for being ſo eaſily routed; a young fellow of the fineſt claſſical taſte; of the moſt liberal and manly ſentiments." The change that took place in him was ſudden and ſtriking. From a paſſionate admirer of the claſſics, he became an adept in myſticiſm, and a profound ſtudent in Madam Guion and Mr Law: and on this rock, he confeſſes in a letter to his brother, that he had nearly ſplit. His admiration of theſe writers conſiderably decreaſed during his reſidence at Georgia: but ſome think, though he diſclaimed the moſt abſurd flights of the myſtics, that the impreſſion they made

on his mind, was never entirely obliterated.

The late Mr Badcock informs us, that, in ſome informations he had received, he could diſcover "the very firſt ſpring of his enthuſiaſm, and was no longer puzzled in accounting for the viciſſitudes of his conduct, or the variety of opinions in divinity, which he adopted:" and that by an incident in domeſtic life, he ſaw his "genius clouded, and the cleareſt reaſon muddied in the ſchool of myſticiſm."

What this incident was, we are not informed. It is much to be wiſhed this learned and ingenious writer had been more particular in explaining it. Had he done ſo, the public might have formed a more accurate judgment, and either have rejected the cauſe aſſigned, as inadequate to the effect, or have admitted

it, in it's full force. As he has left us in the dark, it were in vain to form conjectures. In the letters that paſſed between the family about that time, moſt of which we have ſeen, there are no traces of ſuch an incident. It is therefore to be preſumed, either that the hiſtory of this event has periſhed by accident, or has been cautiouſly withheld.

As this is the caſe, we have no mode of judging, concerning this circumſtance: nor can we form any adequate idea of Mr Weſley's original deſigns, but from his conduct, and his declarations. We have already given our opinion, that he had no intention to put himſelf at the head of a religious body, till about the year 1738: and this opinion we ſee no reaſon to retract. His determination even then ſeems to have been the reſult of a variety of circumſtances, that gra-

dually occurred, and which it was impoſſible he ſhould foreſee: and though politicians are fond of conſidering the actions of public perſons, as the reſult of projects, which, it is more than probable, never entered into their imagination, we ſhall not follow their example.

But let us hear Mr Weſley himſelf. Something had been ſaid of theſe projects, by Mr Badcock: every tittle of which he abſolutely diſclaimed; obſerving, that all that had been ſaid on this ſubject, however ingenious, was "a mere caſtle in the air;" and, inſiſting that the chief impreſſion he had, during moſt of his time, at Oxford, was, not that of his deſignation to ſome "extraordinary work," but ſimply,

"inter ſylvas academi quærere verum:"

and that his ſubſequent conduct was de-

termined by a variety of unexpected events. For ſome years, his love of a college life was ſuperior to every other conſideration: nor does he ſeem, till he had paſt his thirtieth year, to have had a wiſh beyond it.

Being aware of the common opinion, that he laid, at an early period, the plan of his future authority, he has given a particular account of his views ſo late as 1738. At this time, he informs his readers, he was in "haſte to return to Oxford, to bury himſelf in his beloved obſcurity; but being detained in London, week after week, by the truſtees for Georgia, he was importuned to preach in many of the churches; that, partly on account of the vaſt multitudes, and partly his unfaſhionable doctrine, he was at length ſhut out of all the churches; and that, not daring to be ſilent, after a

ſhort ſtruggle between honour and conſcience, he made a virtue of neceſſity, and preached in the middle of Moorfields; that ſeveral came to him for his advice, till they increaſed to about a hundred, whoſe names he took down, that he might viſit them from houſe to houſe:" and thus, he aſſures us, without any previous plan or deſign, the methodiſt ſociety was firſt formed.

After this ſociety commenced, and eſpecially, when others began to be collected in different parts of the nation, it is plain, that he conſidered himſelf as their head, and took proper meaſures to eſtabliſh his authority. A beginning once made, the reſt followed in courſe. Every additional ſociety was an acceſſion to his influence. An increaſe of the ſocieties demanded an addition of preachers; and new preachers producing a

proportionate increaſe of people, he went on in a progreſſion, which, within the few laſt years of his life, was conſiderably ſuperior to any of the former.

Some notice has been already taken of Mr Weſley's notion of methodiſm, which, with an unuſual warmth of colouring, he ſomewhere deſcribes, as "the only religion worthy of God." We ſhall ſelect, in addition to what has been advanced, one or two more paſſages from his writings, not in order to prove, that he was ſuperior to the deſire of preſiding at the head of a party; but to ſhew, that, if any dependence can be placed on the word of a man, he ſeriouſly conſidered the work in which he was engaged, as a religious reformation; and that his firſt and leading deſign, was to do good. In a ſermon, on the difference

between the preſent and former times, he ſpeaks in the following terms:

"I cannot forbear mentioning one inſtance more of the goodneſs of God to us in the preſent age. He has lifted up his ſtandard, in our iſland, againſt luxury, prophaneneſs, and vice of every kind. He cauſed, near fifty years ago, as it were, a grain of muſtard-ſeed, to be ſown near London, and it has grown and put forth great branches, reaching from ſea to ſea. Two or three people met together, in order to help each other to be real chriſtians. They increaſed to hundreds, to thouſands, to myriads; ſtill purſuing their one point, real religion, the love of God and man ruling all their tempers, and words and actions. Now I will be bold to ſay, ſuch an event as this, conſidering it in all it's circumſtances, has not been ſeen upon earth before,

ſince the time that St. John went to Abraham's boſom. No former time, ſince the apoſtles left the earth, has been comparable to it, in ſeveral reſpects."

Here is the true origin of Mr Weſley's zeal; and here we may perceive the ſource of his aſtoniſhing labours. Conceiving nothing ſo excellent and uſeful as the ſyſtem he adopted, he purſued it with an ardour, of which ſcarcely any, but himſelf, had been capable; and poſſeſſing a ſingular talent, of inſpiring others with the ſame views, and communicating to them a portion of the ſpirit by which he was animated, their influence on the minds of their hearers was inconceivable. The churches being ſhut againſt him; and being determined at all events not to relinquiſh the clerical office, by ceaſing to preach, he choſe to appear in houſes and in the fields,

rather than to be ſilent; and few clergymen being willing to imitate this irregularity, or to incur the reproach of itinerancy, he accepted the aſſiſtance of laymen; and, in a way, as unexpected as it was uncommon, and as offenſive to the regular diſſenters as to the church, conſtantly enlarged his ſphere, and proſecuted to the utmoſt, a plan, which he could ſcarcely have formed before hand; and, which unfolding itſelf as he advanced, was gradually preſented to his mind, and finally diſtributed into a regular ſyſtem. The churches, as he informs us, were ſo crouded, wherever he went, that "many of the pariſhioners could not get in. They then preached at Moorfields, Kennington Common, and other places. No clergyman dared to aſſiſt them. Preachers, not ordained, offered themſelves, ſome learned, ſome unlearned, moſt of

them young; ſome weak, others of remarkably ſtrong underſtanding. It may be obſerved, theſe clergymen, all this time, had no plan at all, but to do good."

In the zeal of Mr Weſley, and his friends, we diſcover, not only the origin of methodiſm, but a principal cauſe of it's ſucceſs. Perfectly in earneſt in his religion, and deſirous above all things to be uſeful to mankind, the congregations who attended his miniſtry were eaſily perſuaded of his ſincerity. His ſtrict and rigid ſingularity, his temperance in food and ſleep, his long and conſtant journeys, his more than herculean labours, and that utter contempt of wealth, which was conſpicuous during moſt of his life, were juſtly conſidered by thoſe who knew him, as well as by thouſands, not perſonally acquainted with him, as the

unequivocal effect of the moſt powerful influence of religious principle. With this perſuaſion in the minds of the people, we need not wonder at his ſucceſs. He was conſidered as a phœnomenon in the religious world. Wherever he went, he was received as an apoſtle. His congregations in general were the moſt numerous that attended the miniſtry of any individual, Mr Whitefield only excepted. His company was eagerly ſought, by people of all ranks. His influence in the narrower circles of ſocial life, was perhaps not much inferior, in it's effect on the ſucceſs of his labours, to his public miniſtrations; though, in this laſt view, his friends were fond of comparing him to the apoſtle of the gentiles.

Other reaſons, for the almoſt unexampled influence of this remarkable man, may be found in the internal œconomy

and regulations of the ſocieties. This however ſhall be more particularly conſidered under the head of diſcipline. But in a life of Mr Weſley, it would not become us to omit a reaſon, on which he laid the greateſt ſtreſs. Much aſſiſtance he undoubtedly ſuppoſed himſelf to derive from the prudential regulations he had eſtabliſhed: but in his eſtimation, the chief cauſe of the increaſing influence of his labours and doctrines was to be aſcribed to the divine agency.

Having, in juſtice to the memory of Mr Weſley, and from the cleareſt conviction in ourſelves, endeavoured to ſhew that the leading principle by which he was influenced, was the public good, we muſt alſo remark, that, in the opinion of many, and thoſe too of ability and diſcernment, his next principle was the love of ſway. Perhaps he did not perceive

this ſo plainly, as it was perceived by others. But one of the original methodiſts at Oxford, and next to himſelf, the moſt celebrated among them, often uſed to ſay, that his brother Weſley was "naturally and habitually a tutor, and would be ſo to the end of the chapter." This was his great foible; nor is it difficult, even in a character, ſo generally diſintereſted, to account for. Having been the chief inſtrument in the eſtabliſhment of methodiſm, it is not much to be wondered, if he conſidered his authority as of divine origin: nor is it at all more ſurpriſing, that he ſhould deem the abſolute exerciſe of that authority indiſpenſibly neceſſary to the ſucceſs of what he always regarded as the "work of God." Under his auſpices, every thing had ſucceeded even beyond his expectation;

but he inferred too much from this, when he concluded, that the more unlimited his authority, the greater would be his uſefulneſs among mankind.

CHAP. III.

Of the Principles of Methodism.

WE cannot enter on this ſubject, without pointing out a difficulty. Some will expect from us a diſtinct enumeration of the whole ſyſtem of doctrine, comprehended in the principles of methodiſm: but this expectation it is impoſſible, at leaſt it were improper, to gratify. The detail would conſiderably exceed our limits; and, in all probability, would be as tedious to ſome of our readers, as it might be grateful to others. As it is obvious too, that ſeveral branches of doctrine, are ſuch as Mr Weſley held in common with chriſtians of all de-

nominations, we think it will be proper to obſerve a different method.

Of thoſe principles, in which he agrees with the articles of the church of England, ſuch as the incarnation, the atonement, the reſurrection, and ſeveral others, it were ſuperfluous to take notice. It will be more conſonant to the intention of theſe memoirs, to take a view of thoſe, in which he has been deemed peculiar. As theſe have ſometimes given occaſion to controverſy, and made no little noiſe in the religious world, it will be neceſſary to pay them a particular attention. This we ſhall endeavour to do with candour, but, at the ſame time, with freedom: though to examine the principles of communities, as well as of individuals, is an ungrateful and invidious taſk. But he who expects to pleaſe all, will pleaſe none: and what is infinitely worſe, will

be in no ſmall danger of violating his judgment, and ſacrificing his integrity to the of love applauſe, or to the dread of cenſure.

It is obſervable in Mr Weſley, that, as a clergyman, he took pains to have it underſtood, that the doctrines he taught were ſtrictly agreeable to the thirty-nine articles. But of theſe, as indeed of all other authorities, every man will be diſpoſed to judge, in conformity to his own ſyſtem. Mr Weſley and his followers conſidered the articles as Arminian. Mr Whiteſield, on the contrary, and his friends, had no doubt that they were Calviniſtic: while others, who chuſe rather to adopt the medium between the two extremes, are perſuaded that they are more favourable to the Baxterian, or Miltonian ſyſtem.

As Mr Weſley greatly wiſhed his

ſentiments to be conſidered as agreeable to the articles, it may naturally be ſuppoſed, he was ſtill more deſirous that they ſhould appear ſtrictly conformable to what an apoſtle calls "the analogy of faith." Agreeable to this inclination, in all his controverſies, his chief appeal was to the ſcriptures. In many of the doctrines he inculcated, he might boldly make ſuch an appeal; as it is not to be doubted, that they were well calculated to promote the intereſts of chriſtianity.

The general rule, which he preſcribed for himſelf, and for all chriſtians, is the ſame which is laid down by St. Paul; "whether ye eat, or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God." An excellent rule; but capable, like other general principles, of being wreſted and miſunderſtood. The multitude will not be too ſtrict in the explanation of ſuch a

precept. This Mr Wesley well knew, and he took care not to descend to the common interpretations, nor to be too lax in his application of the text. Many have supposed, and with some shew of reason, that he was inclined to carry matters too far, and to strain religious systems to an extent, as foreign to the condition, as it was beyond the powers of human nature.

Among other authorities for this supposition, are the resolutions into which he entered in the beginning of his religious course; which were "to use absolute openness and unreserve, with all he should converse with; to labour after continual seriousness, not willingly indulging himself in any, the least levity of behaviour, or in laughter, no, not for a moment; to speak no word, which does not tend to the glory of God; in parti-

cular, not a tittle of worldly things; and to take no pleaſure, which does not tend to the glory of God."

One of theſe rules we ſhould think imprudent, and others impracticable.—"Abſolute openneſs and unreſerve" might often not only bring a man into diſagreeable and even dangerous ſituations, but be the means of creating inſuperable prejudice; and, as it is a caſe in point, we ſhall take the liberty to relate a ſtory of a preacher in Mr Weſley's connexion, who, in the practice of this rule, was very near expoſing himſelf to no ſmall danger. A general officer happening to come to the town where he was, he went to ſee the troops reviewed. The officer was obſerved to ſwear. The next morning early, he went to his lodgings, and knocking at the door, aſked the ſervant if his maſter was up. He

was desired to call again, in two or three hours; but he insisted on seeing the general immediately on urgent business. The footman finding him so importunate, ran up and told his master, who ordered him to be shewn into his chamber. When the servant withdrew, after a short introduction, he gave the general to understand, that he was come to reprove him for swearing so heartily the day before; and that he meant to have done it on the field; but was prevented by the croud. The officer thanked him with great politeness, and added, "I am extremely happy, Sir, that you did not enter upon this business during the review; for, if you had, I should certainly have run you through the body." The application of this anecdote is obvious. We shall only observe, that zeal without prudence will

ſcarcely qualify it's poſſeſſor for the office of a reprover.

Equal objections lie againſt other parts of theſe reſolutions. By what means a man, whom ſome philoſophers have been at a loſs how to define, but by calling him a riſible animal, can live without laughing, may be an admirable queſtion for the naturaliſts. For our part, we have never arrived at this ſpecies of perfection: nor indeed do we greatly covet it; and when we ſee any thing ridiculous, the caſe is plain: we muſt either laugh or ſplit. It is equally clear, that a ſimilar objection, that is, ſomething very like an abſolute impoſſibility, lies in the way of the reſolution, not to ſpeak "a tittle of worldly things:" a reſolution which no man ever did or can obſerve. We mention theſe things, not from a humour of criticiſing, but becauſe we have often

ſeen ignorant people render themſelves ridiculous, by their awkward attempts to obſerve rules equally impracticable and abſurd. What might be paſſable in Mr Weſley, would appear contemptible in moſt of his imitators: and it has been obſerved, that he ſoon found ſome of his rules to be over ſtretched, and frequently, even in the advanced ſtages of life, forgot the auſterity of his principles, and entered with a good grace, into all the chearfulneſs of innocent mirth.

Mr Weſley never attended any place of public amuſement; and though he did not declaim againſt them with ſo much ſeverity as ſome of his people, it is plain, he did not regard them with a favourable eye. This indeed, is no great matter of wonder; for whatever may be ſaid in favour of ſome diverſions of the age, it is certain that many of them are

infamous and brutal; and above all the reſt, pugiliſm and cock-fighting, and the reſt of that illiberal claſs. Of theſe we do not doubt to ſay, they are the diſgrace of this country and of humanity. As Mr Weſley has explained himſelf on theſe ſubjects, we ſelect the following obſervations, which he doubtleſs intended as a rule for his ſocieties. Of quarter ſtaff, cudgelling, bear and bull-baiting, and the like, he ſays, "they are foul remains of Gothic barbarity; a reproach, not only to religion, but to human nature. One would not paſs ſo ſevere a cenſure on the ſports of the field. Let thoſe who have nothing better to do, ſtill run foxes and hares out of breath. Nor need much be ſaid about horſe races, till ſome man of ſenſe will undertake to defend them. It ſeems a great deal more may be ſaid in defence of ſeeing a ſerious trage-

dy. I could not do it with a clear conſcience; at leaſt, not in an Engliſh theatre, the ſink of all prophaneneſs and debauchery; but poſſibly others can. I cannot ſay quite ſo much for balls and aſſemblies, which, though more reputable than maſquerades, muſt be allowed by all impartial perſons, to have exactly the ſame tendency. Of playing cards, I ſay the ſame as of ſeeing plays. I could not do it with a clear conſcience. But I am not obliged to paſs any ſentence on thoſe who are otherwiſe minded. I leave them to their own maſter: to him let them ſtand or fall."

We are now to enquire into the leading doctrines, in which Mr Weſley has been deemed peculiar; and in which he differs from almoſt all the divines of every church. The firſt of theſe is the doctrine of the "direct witneſs." As ſome

notice has been taken of this in the former part of theſe memoirs; and ſome arguments againſt it by Mrs Weſley and Mr Samuel Weſley have been recited, there is no neceſſity to enlarge upon it. It is ſufficient to ſay, that the doctrine was always unpopular, and except in Mr Weſley's ſocieties, found few patrons; that by ſome it is inculcated, as the moſt important in the chriſtian ſyſtem; while others are equally zealous in oppoſing it, as the fundamental error of methodiſm.

The dangerous uſe that has been made of this doctrine, cannot be more clearly perceived than in a remark in one of Mr Weſley's ſermons, concerning the manner in which the firſt methodiſts inſiſted upon it. We give it in his own words. "Near fifty years ago, the preachers were not ſufficiently

apprized of the difference between a ſervant and a child of God. They did not clearly underſtand, that every one who feareth God, and worketh righteouſneſs, is accepted of him." In conſequence of this, they were apt to make ſad the hearts of thoſe whom God had not made ſad. For they frequently aſked thoſe who feared God, "do you know that your ſins are forgiven?" And upon their anſwering no, immediately replied, 'then you are a child of the devil.' This diſtinction, between a child and a ſervant of God, which we have before had occaſion to mention, is arbitrary and capricious. It has, in reality, no foundation in ſcripture or reaſon: but the quotation is a proof what a miſerable uſe has been made of the doctrine in queſtion; and how fatal an influence it muſt have had on weak minds.

The chief doctrine, in which Mr Wesley seems to stand alone, and to differ from the divines of every church, is "christian perfection." Of this he has treated at large in several parts of his writings, and in one or two distinct treatises. His meaning seems to be, that there is a state to be attained, at almost any period of life, in which we may be delivered, not only from sinful actions, but from the very nature and being of sin; or, in other words, from every irregular desire, and from all inordinate passions and affections. This he calls christian perfection: and this state he supposes may be acquired in a moment, by an act of faith.

In his manner of proving this, from scripture, there is often much darkness and ambiguity. Thus, in some places, he tell us, it is "to love the Lord our God with all our hearts;" in others, it

is to "rejoice evermore, to pray without ceaſing, and in every thing to give thanks." But in ſtating a doctrine, or in defining a term, in which that doctrine is contained, it certainly is not accurate, to ſpeak in the words of ſcripture, but in the language uſual among men. For ſcripture is liable to ſuch a variety of interpretation; and much of it's phraſeology is ſo peculiarly comprehenſive, that the terms borrowed from it, to explain a doctrine, will, in many inſtances, as much demand explanation as the doctrine itſelf.

It is no ſmall objection to this ſcheme, that it ſeems to be taken, not from the divine authority, but from the mere report of individuals: and it is well remembered, that, at a conference in London, one of the preachers offering ſome arguments againſt it, Mr Weſley imme-

diately roſe up; anſwered his arguments by reciting the experience of ſome good old woman; and, without waiting for a reply, diſſolved the aſſembly.

As for St. Paul, who is often cited as the patron of perfection, it does not follow, becauſe he uſes the word, that he muſt neceſſarily uſe it in Mr Weſley's ſenſe; or that he teaches the doctrine on ſimilar principles. It is obvious that he uſes the word in different ſenſes; that he generally intends by it, the ſtate of chriſtians of ſome ſtanding in the profeſſion and practice of chriſtianity, in oppoſition to the ignorance and weakneſs of new converts; and that, in ſome places is meant neither more nor leſs than the ſtate of glory after the reſurrection. But there is no reaſon, from the writings of this apoſtle, or from any other ſcripture, to conclude, that there is a ſtate

of perfection, to which, as to a certain ſtage, the primitive chriſtians did, and thoſe of every age ſtill may inſtantaneouſly arrive.

There is another terrible objection to this doctrine. It is a new thing "under the ſun;" and of mere human invention. It was no part of the profeſſion of the primitive chriſtians. Among their people, they knew of but three claſſes, the catechumens, the penitents, and the faithful. They made no diſtinction of *common* and *perfect* believers. They never exalted one claſs of chriſtians into a ſtate of ſuperiority above the reſt: nor did they afford them any pretence to think highly of themſelves; to deſpiſe their brethren, or to ſay to another, "ſtand by; come not near me; for I am holier than thou!"

It is alſo ſomewhat remarkable, that

Mr Weſley, who had long patroniſed the doctrine; who had ſhewn, on every occaſion the moſt decided partiality to thoſe who profeſſed it; and who, for many years, ſeldom preached a ſermon, without largely inſiſting upon it, could never be perſuaded, to profeſs it himſelf. It is proper to add, that many of the preachers and people believe not a ſyllable of this doctrine.

Mr Weſley, in enquiring "whether God works this change inſtantaneouſly or not," acknowledges, "the ſcriptures are ſilent upon it; the point not being determined, at leaſt, not in expreſs terms, in any part of the oracles of God." If there were any truth in this doctrine, it is eaſy to infer, that the ſcriptures would not have been ſilent upon it. And if God does work thus inſtantaneouſly, where is the utility of pain and ſickneſs,

and other afflictive diſpenſations? On this hypotheſis, they are ſuperfluous; and the "perfect work," of which St. James ſpeaks, is accompliſhed, not by the inſtrumentality of outward means, but by a ſudden exertion of Omnipotence.

The inconſiſtency of the advocates for this ſyſtem, is worthy of obſervation. For their firſt authority, they go back to the Old Teſtament, and thence derive the original promiſe of ſanctification. But it unfortunately happens, this promiſe was made to the Jews in captivity, and was literally accompliſhed in the final reformation from the impurities of idolatry. When it is retorted from the ſame authority; "there is not a juſt man upon earth, that doeth good, and ſinneth not;" the anſwer then is, "this might hold under the law; but the law made

nothing perfect." So that the ſame authority, which is urged as inconteſtible, when it appears to favour them, is without ceremony rejected, when it makes againſt them!

A ſimilar ſpecimen of Mr Weſley's mode of reaſoning on this ſubject, occurs in the fourth Journal. By a dexterous uſe of his logical ingenuity, he ſilenced many an opponent, whom he could not convince. His grand argument is couched in the following queries, which he ſeemed to conſider as unanſwerable: "Was there inward corruption in our Lord? Or, cannot the ſervant be as his maſter?" But this knot is eaſily untied, by ſimply anſwering the queſtions: there was no "inward corruption" in our Lord; there are alſo many inſtances in which the ſervant cannot be "as his maſter;" and this among

the reſt: for it was never ſaid of any, except himſelf, that he "knew no ſin, neither was guile found in his mouth."

The doctrine of perfection was one ſubject of difference between Mr Weſley and the moravians. His old friend Böhler in particular, endeavoured to reaſon him out of it; and this he did in a way, which though ſomewhat homely, was not deſtitute of ingenuity. "There is no ſuch ſtate, ſaid Peter, as *ſinleſs perfection*: Sin will, and always muſt remain in the ſoul. The *old man* will remain till death. The *old nature* is like an old tooth; you may break off one bit, and another, and another; but you can never get it all away; the ſtump of it will ſtay as long as you live; and ſometimes it will ache too."

Mr Charles Weſley was no great favourite of this principle. He thought they carried it to an undue extreme.

And if we may judge of the tree by it's fruits, ſuch a mode of deciſion will ſcarcely incline in its favour a diſpaſſionate enquirer. The advocates of perfection are not the moſt amiable people in Mr Weſley's ſocieties. They have been the parents of much confuſion and diſcord; and have been particularly diſtinguiſhed by the bad uſe they made of their influence, filling him with prejudices againſt thoſe infidels, who could not allow them to be as perfect as they pretended.

Being aware of objections from this quarter, Mr Weſley had recourſe once more to his logical ſkill, by adopting a diſtinction, ſimilar to that of the catholics, of ſins mortal and venial. He diſtinguiſhes between wilful tranſgreſſion, and ſins of infirmity: and had he ſtopt there, we ſhould have taken no notice of his diſtinction. But when he ſuppoſed

his friends to be ſubject to theſe ſins of infirmity, and at the ſame time judged them to be perfect, he certainly ſuppoſed a contradiction in terms.

But it is time to diſmiſs this ſubject; which it appeared neceſſary to take notice of, ſince it was ſo favourite a doctrine with Mr Weſley; and which there is an additional reaſon for conſidering, not merely, as we ſuppoſe the profeſſors of perfection to have deceived themſelves in that profeſſion; but as it is conceived to have a more direct tendency toward ſpiritual pride, and phariſaic haughtineſs and bigotry, than any other ſyſtem.

Of other doctrines taught by Mr Weſley, and inculcated in what are uſually called, evangelical views of religion, ſuch as the well known diſtinction, of works as conditions of ſalvation, and works as ſtrictly and properly meritorious, much

has been ſaid, on the ſuppoſition, that ſuch ſentiments were unfavourable to morality. This tendency we are not able to perceive. If a man cannot be ſaved, without a conſcientious obſervance of the law of God, and the practice of ſuch good works as he has ability and opportunity to perform, there is exactly the ſame obligation to obedience, as if that obedience were, in the ſtricteſt ſenſe of the word, meritorious. It may be obſerved too, that whatever tendency, any doctrine Mr Weſley inculcated, may be ſuppoſed to have, he had no idea of it, as inferring any relaxation in morals, or as conferring any diſpenſation from the obſervance, either of ſocial duty, or religious obligation. But as theſe doctrines are in no reſpect peculiar to Mr Weſley, but inculcated in the articles and homilies of the church of England,

and inſiſted upon by many, perhaps by moſt of the religious communities in Europe, nothing more need be added, except this one obſervation :—Theſe doctrines, like all others, often cut a miſerable figure, from the injudicious and abſurd garb, which bunglers put upon them: for, as even a bad opinion may appear amiable, from a ſkilful repreſentation; ſo the beſt may be rendered hideous, by extravagance and exceſs.

Were we aſked, in what inſtances Mr Weſley erred, in matters of doctrine, we ſhould ſay, that he chiefly did ſo, by making religion too ſenſible and too circumſtantial. There is, ſo to ſpeak, a want of elegance and ſimplicity in his ſyſtem. He was too fond of dividing and ſubdividing religion into certain ſtages, as objects of inſtantaneous attainment: and his diſtinctions of a child and a ſer-

vant of God; of faith, the aſſurance of faith, and the full aſſurance of faith; of the witneſs and the abiding witneſs, and finally, of a perfection, inſtantaneous, and yet amiſſible, reduces his ſyſtem to a kind of manual exerciſe, and throws over it a confuſion and obſcurity, which, to moſt underſtandings, muſt render it perfectly unintelligible.

CHAP. IV.

Of the Methodistic Discipline.

THE diſcipline introduced by Mr Weſley, like all other inſtitutions, has had the common fate, of much praiſe and much cenſure. Many, from the ſtrictneſs it enforces, and the reſtraints it lays upon it's votaries, have compared it to the monaſtic and other inſtitutions of popery: and ſome, from a refined policy, which they pretend to have diſcovered, have placed it on a ſimilar footing with that of the Society of Jeſus. But we cannot entirely agree with theſe reaſoners. The diſcipline of Mr Weſley is certainly, in ſome reſpects, rigid; much more ſo than that of the proteſtant churches in ge-

neral; and ſo far may bear a compariſon with ſome inſtances of Romiſh auſterity; though the pattern he had in his eye, was to be found, not in this, but in the moravian church. But the compariſon, in the other inſtance, is far from juſt. Ignatius de Loyola, when he founded his order, or at leaſt his ſucceſſors, made their primary object, the intereſt and aggrandizement of the church of Rome, and took it for granted, they might uſe guile and ſtratagem, or any other method, for "the glory of God," or what, in their eſtimation, was the ſame thing, the good of the church. Mr Weſley ſet out with purer motives, as is demonſtrable from his letters to his moſt intimate friends; and was far from attempting to eſtabliſh his influence on the ruins of morality. If he did ſometimes err in this inſtance, it was not from prin-

ciple, but from ſurpriſe or overſight; and now and then, from ſome ſuppoſed neceſſity, or from the ſolicitations of ſelfiſh and deſigning men. The principal circumſtance in which we judge him to have deviated from the direct path, is, in ſome inſtances, well known to his friends, when there was an inconſiſtency between his conduct and his profeſſions; particularly, in the attachment he profeſſed for the church, and his irregularity, eſpecially of late, in ſuperſeding her regulations.

It muſt be recollected, that, when Mr Weſley ſet out upon his plan, it was under a firm perſuaſion, of an expreſs call from God. Himſelf and his preachers he regarded as "extraordinary meſſengers," who, in a way peculiar, and contrary to the uſual forms, were appointed (to adopt his own words) "to reform

the nation, particularly the church; and to ſpread ſcriptural holineſs over the land." Conceiving this to have been his intention, and giving him credit for his profeſſions on this ſubject, there is certainly a good deal of ingenuity and originality in the ſyſtem he adopted.

The firſt thing that ſtrikes an attentive obſerver, in his general diſcipline, is a total contrariety to all the ſects and parties that have ariſen, wherever there have been national eſtabliſhments. However theſe ſects have differed from each other, there was one general principle, in which they never failed to agree, a cordial averſion to the eſtabliſhed church. This was as zealouſly inculcated, and by frequently dwelling upon the grounds of diſſent, as aſſiduouſly kept up, as if the ſalvation of mankind depended upon it. The conſequence was inevitable,

The rent became wider. Each was armed with additional prejudice againſt the other. Sectaries and eſtabliſhments reſembled the Jews and the Samaritans. The mount Gerazim of the one, and the Jeruſalem of the other, reſounded with their mutual fulminations; and every avenue, toward a reconciliation, was guarded by the phrenzy of the bigots, as with a ſword of flame.

Mr Weſley, as we may judge, as well from his general plan, as from ſome expreſſions in his writings, was very ſenſible of this: and as he had no objection to the articles or the liturgy, nor any of thoſe ſcruples which are urged by the non-conformiſts, but, on the contrary, a ſtrong bias, from education and habit, in favour of the church, he had no idea of ſetting out on the common principles of diſſent. Speaking of other ſectaries,

he obſerves, they laid the foundation of their ſyſtem "in condemning others; we in judging and condemning ourſelves." His plan therefore was formed on different principles. He wiſhed to be generally uſeful: and, with this view, though he did not deſert the church, at leaſt not formally, he expreſſed great moderation with regard to other denominations, and inculcated it as a principle, that none ſhould conſider their union with him as a renunciation of their original profeſſion, but continue to obſerve the ordinances of their reſpective communities.

A principle ſo novel and peculiar, made no ſmall impreſſion on the minds of men. It had at leaſt an air of liberality. It flattered their habits and prejudices; and it fully anſwered his expectation. People of all parties and perſuaſions became proſelytes to his opini-

ons; and ſtill retaining ſome tincture of their former profeſſion, united under his ſtandard. It is remarkable however, that, in conſequence of this union, and a free intercourſe with each other, the features of their different profeſſions grew leſs and leſs diſtinct, and their former prejudices ſubſiding by degrees, were retouched and modified into a firm attachment to the methodiſtic ſyſtem. On their firſt mingling with his ſocieties, they felt not the ſhock of a rupture with their own party, ſince ſuch a rupture was not neceſſary to an union with him: and time and habit would ſufficiently rivet them to their new brethren.

In conformity to this general plan, Mr Weſley took care to adjuſt the particulars of his ceremonial. That he might not interfere either with the church or the diſſenters, he appointed for his pub-

lic worſhip, not the uſual hours of the forenoon and the afternoon; but early in the morning, and from five or ſix to ſeven in the evening. This gave his people an opportunity, in the courſe of the day, to attend any miniſter they choſe to hear: and it anſwered another purpoſe. It brought multitudes to his houſes in the evening of the Sabbath-day, when few others officiated; and on the other evenings of the week, when he was ſtill leſs liable to be interfered with by the diſſenters or the clergy.

A diſtinguiſhing feature in this œconomy is itinerancy. Something of this, though in a leſs degree, may be obſerved in the moravians, whoſe miniſters are appointed to their reſpective diſtricts by their rulers, and when they think proper, ſuperſeded by others. But in Mr Weſley's ſyſtem, it is itinerancy in the

proper ſenſe of the word; the preachers being annually appointed, and revolving round a certain ſphere, in conſtant rotation; though their revolutions are leſs rapid than formerly. Every part of Britain and America is divided into regular portions, called circuits; and each circuit, containing twenty or thirty places, is ſupplied by a certain number of travelling preachers, from two to three or four, who go round it in a month or ſix weeks, ſeldom paſſing more than one or two days in a place, except the principal town in their diſtrict, where they generally ſpend from eight to fourteen or fifteen days.

The itinerant plan certainly argues, in it's projector, a conſiderable knowledge of human nature. By ſecuring a monthly ſucceſſion of preachers, during their appointment to a circuit, and then

an annual, or at moſt a biennial change, he made a proviſion for that love of variety, ſo natural to mankind; and by perpetually keeping up a kind of novelty, and conſequently, of curioſity and expectation in the people, he did every thing that human policy could have deviſed, under circumſtances of ſuch irregularity, for preſerving and increaſing his congregations. There are not many miniſters, of any denomination, perhaps there is not one, whatever his eloquence and ability, who poſſeſſes the faculty of always appearing new. Every man has his peculiar manner, an addreſs and a ſtrain of thinking and ſpeaking which is his own; and when long habit has made his ſtyle and ſentiments familiar to a people, he will loſe much of that power of pleaſing, which, in the minds of the multitude, is attached rather to ſound, or

ſome other external charm, than to good ſenſe, and juſt elocution.

This peculiarity is the chief ſupport; the ground and pillar of methodiſm. So long as itinerancy can be preſerved, and a frequent change of preachers kept up, ſo long will methodiſm proſper: but, ſhould any unexpected ſhock looſen the foundations of this ſyſtem; ſhould it happen, in any future ſtruggles for diſtinction and pre-eminence, that the body ſhould be divided into parties, and itinerancy be ſuperſeded, from that moment methodiſm is no more. Mr Weſley perceived this; and as by the authority lodged in his hands, by his conſtant deſignation of the preachers to their reſpective circuits, and his own practice of viſiting every part of the nation, he was the life aud ſoul of itinerancy, he took every method of preſerving it inviolate.

Many years ago, a prelate of high diſtinction on the bench, made a propoſal to Mr Weſley, to provide for him, and to ordain ſuch preachers as he ſhould recommend, on condition, that he would relinquiſh itinerancy, and give up his ſocieties. But whatever his views might be, it was little likely he ſhould accede to ſuch a propoſal. Had his chief object been power and reputation, he would ſcarcely be induced to ſubject himſelf to the authority of a dioceſan; and if he had nothing in view, but the public good, he would never conſent to a ſurrender of his authority, leſt the itinerant plan ſhould be aboliſhed. It is obvious too, that it was not in his power to have fulfilled the terms of this propoſal, had he been ſo inclined. He might indeed have relinquiſhed the ſocieties, and have accepted his Lordſhip's offer of preferment:

but had he done ſo, they would certainly have proſecuted the ſame plan, under another leader or leaders; for ſo ſtrongly were they attached to the œconomy he had eſtabliſhed, that a diſſolution of the connexion, was at that time, impracticable.

A circumſtance, in the Weſleian œconomy, as remarkable as any, is the admiſſion of lay-preachers. Of this ſome notice has been taken in a former volume; and though averſe to all encroachments on the liberties of mankind, whether eccleſiaſtical or civil, we muſt repeat our idea, that public examination, and and an authoriſed and ſolemn form of ordination to the ſacred office, is eſſential to the preſervation of decency and good order. What mode of ordination is the beſt and moſt agreeable to the canon of ſcripture and the apoſto-

lic uſage, may perhaps, with ſome ſhew of reaſon, furniſh matter for controverſy among the patrons of oppoſite ſyſtems; but whether any public mode of deſignation to the miniſtry be proper, is a queſtion that can never be agitated among rational beings, ſince common ſenſe will inſtantly decide upon it. To this office, none ought certainly to be admitted, but ſuch as, upon an adequate examination, ſhall be found competent: and thoſe who are qualified, ought indiſputably to be ſet apart for it, by ſome ſuitable mode of ordination.

The admiſſion of lay preachers, which was conſidered as a ſort of levelling ſcheme, was not well received by the higher orders of ſociety. In Mr Whitefield's connexion, this ſyſtem was not ſo remarkable: for he was aſſiſted by many clergymen, who had embraced his opi-

nions, and conſequently had leſs need of laymen: and many of thoſe, who were not epiſcopally ordained, contrived to procure ſome ſort of ordination, and officiated in the clerical habit.—If they were not clergymen, they took care to borrow the garb.

Though this deviation in Mr Weſley from the clerical regularity, was not reliſhed by the rich and the great, it was better received among the lower claſs. It flattered their natural fondneſs for equalization; while it laid a foundation for a perpetual and inexhauſtible ſupply of preachers, and conſequently, was no ſmall ſource of the rapid increaſe of the ſocieties.

In Mr Weſley's plan, almoſt every thing that could be thought of, as having a tendency to create influence, and conciliate eſteem, was ſanctioned by a ſtand-

ing rule. Viſiting from houſe to houſe; a punctual attention to the ſick and afflicted; frequent collections for the poor, and the ſtrict morality which is inculcated in the regulations he eſtabliſhed, have an air of much piety and humanity, and doubtleſs had no ſmall influence on the ſucceſs of his undertakings.

In this ſyſtem, the order is as follows: the preachers, the ſtewards, the leaders, the people. The office of a preacher, is to preach twice a day, to viſit the ſick, to meet the ſtewards and leaders once a week, and to preſide in the various meetings wherever he ſhall happen to be preſent. One preacher, in every circuit, is called the aſſiſtant. It is his buſineſs to ſuperintend the conduct of the other preachers, and of the ſocieties at large; to appoint all the occaſional aſſemblies, ſuch as watch-nights, and quarterly meet-

ings; to make the collections at ſtated periods; and to give an account, at the annual conference, of the ſtate of the ſocieties in his circuit.

The office of a ſteward, is to receive the collections, and to ſuperintend the temporal œconomy of the ſocieties. That of a leader is to meet once a week a certain number of people, who are called his claſs; to receive their contributions, which he gives in to the ſteward, to ſuperintend their conduct, and to aſſiſt the preachers in viſiting the ſick.

It is expected of the people, that they ſtrictly obſerve the rules of the ſociety, by punctually attending the meetings, public and private; by keeping up public worſhip in their families; by abſtaining from all games, ſuch as cards and dice, and whatever is uſually claſſed under the head of amuſement; and above

all, by avoiding every ſpecies of immorality.

The meetings among the methodiſts, eſpecially in large towns, are almoſt without number. Every ſociety is divided into companies of ten or fifteen, called claſſes; each of which regularly meets the leader once a week. Many of theſe are ſubdivided into ſmaller companies, called bands, which alſo meet once a week; and theſe are again collected into a general company, called the body bands, and another called the ſelect band; each of which is met by the preacher once a week. It is needleſs to add, that theſe meetings are purely religious. The ſelect bands are made up chiefly of thoſe who profeſs perfection, and, as the name ſignifies, are, for ſome real or ſuppoſed diſtinction in piety, ſelected from the reſt. Theſe were the peculiar favourites

of Mr Weſley; and, at one time, that is, during the rage of prophecy, in 1763, amounted, in London alone, to about ſix hundred. If, to the meetings already enumerated, we add from thirteen to fourteen ſermons preached in the courſe of the week, which is the caſe in many places in the kingdom, and the love-feaſts, the watch-nights, and occaſional meetings for prayer, as on Wedneſdays and Fridays, the number will be aſtoniſhing! Indeed, we do not ſcruple to ſay, they are much too frequent; and that a relaxation, in this inſtance, eſpecially among the large ſocieties, would be a general good, not only to the preachers, who, in more ſenſes than one, are exhauſted and worn out by this exceſſive labour, but alſo to the people, who are too frequently called away from their families, and their temporal concerns.

Much fault has been found with the mode of conducting many of these meetings. To the classes and bands, it has been particularly objected, that they turn too much on personal examination and enquiry into the states of individuals; and have a tendency to produce, in the ignorant or hypocritical, false and absurd pretensions to superior sanctity. In this instance, we are of opinion, an alteration might easily be made for the better; and that, if advice and exhortation, or even a free conversation on some scriptural subject, were substituted, it would be more conducive to the interests of religion.

In the beginning of methodism, and always till the execution of the deed in 1784, every preacher was considered, when admitted to travel, as a member of conference; which was held, in the months of July or August, at Lon-

don, Briſtol, Leeds, or Mancheſter.

In this meeting Mr Weſley preſided. Here young preachers, offered upon trial, were admitted or rejected. The character of every itinerant underwent a ſcrutiny, and, in caſe of immorality, or any ſufficient cauſe, the puniſhment was ſuſpenſion or diſmiſſion. Each preacher, on admiſſion, paid one guinea, and half a guinea annually, as a fund for the ſupport of ſuperannuated preachers, and their widows. Collections were here received from all quarters, for the ſupport of the work; and the preachers were appointed to their diſtricts for the enſuing year.

It may naturally be ſuppoſed, that, among two or three hundred perſons, there would ſometimes happen a claſhing of intereſts; and that ſeveral, being anxious for an appointment to the ſame

circuit, ſome unpleaſant altercations would ariſe. But this was much leſs frequent than might have been expected. Mr Weſley generally marked their reſpective circuits in his own plan, and regulated almoſt every thing of importance, previous to the meeting of conference; ſo that, within the laſt fifteen or twenty years, this meeting was in fact rather for the declaration or ratification of his deciſions, than for any purpoſes of deliberation and counſel: and ſuch was the aſcendency he had acquired, and ſuch their eſteem and veneration for this extraordinary man, that though the whigs now and then complained, and felt a little ſore, on being treated like a French parliament, as he ſometimes called them, in general, they did not fail to acquieſce. There were, however, ſome inſtances to the contrary. Some not only remonſtra-

ted againſt any thing they diſapproved, but even challenged him to diſpute the point; an invitation, which, it is needleſs to add, was not often accepted. But rebellion was ſeldom ſucceſsful, and the malcontents were commonly under the neceſſity of ſubmiting, or of leaving the connexion.

At the meetings of conference, Mr Weſley uſually preached both night and morning. On theſe occaſions he took care to exemplify in his own practice, and in a manner peculiar to himſelf, to enforce early riſing, with ſimilar regulations. And every one knows, that he had a ſuperior talent, for making trifles appear important, and for turning indifferent things, when he diſapproved them, into ridicule and contempt. The moſt judicious of his preachers and people always thought he went too far in trifles and non-

eſſentials; but they all admired the addreſs with which he recommended them.

By ſome of his followers, his conduct and opinions were obſerved, as an infallible rule of judgment and practice. Some of his preachers carried their admiration ſo far as to quote his writings in public, as others quote the ſcriptures, and to imitate him in almoſt every thing. If he left off tea, which he did in 1742, they did the ſame. If he lay upon the boards, or lived on vegetables, they did ſo too: and becauſe he was fond of morning preaching, they obſerved the practice, at five in the morning, winter and ſummer though, very often, they could ſcarcely collect half a dozen hearers. Some imitated his hand writing, and ſo exactly copied his ſtile and manner of ſpeaking, that the difference was almoſt imperceptible.

How he accompliſhed it, is not eaſy to ſay. Perhaps his extreme attention to theſe minutiæ might be a powerful inſtrument in his popularity. The fact however, is certain. Scarcely any man has ever poſſeſſed in ſuch perfection, the talent of attaching mankind to his perſon and opinions: and this enabled him to eſtabliſh a diſcipline, not naturally pleaſing to the human mind; and to inforce it's obſervance, with a punctuality that is inconceivable. We incline to think, that the opinion of his ſincerity and zeal, was the chief ſource of this ſingular docility; and that really conceiving theſe regulations to be important, he the more eaſily perſuaded others, that they were ſo.

The chief excellence of this ſyſtem, is it's rigid attention to morality. This remark is indeed contrary to the general opinion: but that opinion is ill founded;

for it is founded in ignorance and prejudice. In all ſocieties, ſome will be found, who are a ſcandal to their profeſſion: and among the methodiſts, as well as others, ſome hypocrites will endeavour to deceive; and the ſecretly vicious will impoſe as uſual, upon the unſuſpecting, and for a time elude the moſt induſtrious vigilance. But no vice is allowed in this œconomy. No ſociety, not even that of the Quakers, is ſo rigid in this reſpect; and in general, whenever a member is found to be immoral, he is inſtantly excluded.

There are however, two general defects, too obvious to be concealed: the one in the diſcipline itſelf; the other in the manner in which it is adminiſtered. In the former view, it is too intricate and complex; abounding in minutiæ, and as full of manœuvre and evolution as the

German tactics. In the latter we obſerve ſome partiality; particularly in the appointments of the itinerants. Improper perſons are appointed to the office of aſſiſtants. A certain number of preachers, through an intereſt they have contrived to keep up with Mr. Weſley, have for ſome years paſt, almoſt appropriated to themſelves a ſet of circuits, which they have found to be the moſt eligible; and conſequently, have confined others not in any reſpect their inferiors, except in an undue influence, to thoſe, which are the moſt uncomfortable and laborious. This is an evil, which the deed of 1784, is well calculated to increaſe: and it is an evil, among others, which, if not remedied, will certainly operate to the diviſion of methodiſm, and finally to it's deſtruction.

CHAP. V.

REASONS FOR INTERFERING WITH THE CLERGY. OF PREACHING EXTEMPORE, AND IN THE OPEN AIR.

THE oppoſition Mr Weſley met with from various quarters, was, as we have ſeen, for the moſt part, violent and illiberal: in ſome few inſtances, it was more candid. Some he found, who abhorring every ſpecies of perſecution, and yet not perfectly ſatisfied concerning his authority for going up and down, and interfering with the regular clergy of every denomination, entered into a friendly diſcuſſion, and frankly ſtated their objections. They thought he ought

rather to have retired to the univerſity, as formerly, or to have remained ſilent, till preſented to a living; and that on "catholic principles," by which we ſuppoſe, was meant equitable principles, he could not juſtify his proceedings. The anſwer we ſubjoin in his own words.

"If by catholic principles, you mean any other than ſpiritual, they weigh nothing with me. I allow no other rule, whether of faith, or practice, than the holy ſcriptures. But on ſcriptural principles, I do not think it hard, to juſtify whatever I do. God, in the ſcriptures, commands me, according to my power, to inſtruct the ignorant, reform the wicked, and confirm the virtuous. Man forbids me to do this in another's pariſh; that is, in effect, to do it at all; ſeeing I have now no pariſh of my own, nor probably ever ſhall. Whom then ſhall I hear,

God or man? 'If it be juſt to obey man, rather than God, judge you. A diſpenſation of the goſpel is committed to me, and woe is me, if I preach not the goſpel.' But where ſhall I preach it, upon the principles you mention? Why, not in Europe, Aſia, Africa, or America: not in any of the chriſtian parts, at leaſt, of the habitable earth. For all theſe are, after a ſort, divided into pariſhes. If it be ſaid, 'go back to the heathen, from whence you came;' nay: but neither could I now, on your principles, preach to them. For all the heathens in Georgia, belong to the pariſh either of Savannah or Frederica.

"Suffer me now to tell you my principles in this matter. I look upon all the world as my pariſh; thus far, I mean, that in whatever part of it I am, I judge it meet, right, and my bounden duty, to

declare unto all, that are willing to hear, the glad tidings of ſalvation. This is the work, which I know God has called me to. And ſure I am, that his bleſſing attends it. Great encouragement have I therefore to be faithful, in fulfilling the work he hath given me to do. His ſervant I am, and as ſuch, employed according to the plain direction of his word, as I have opportunity, "doing good unto all men." And his providence clearly concurs with his word; which has diſengaged me from all things elſe, that I might ſingly attend on this very thing, and go about, doing good."

Such being the principles, on which he founded his authority for acting as he did, we cannot much wonder at his perſeverance. Conſidering himſelf obliged to preach, and not being permitted to do ſo in the uſual form, he ſtruck out a new

pian. Excluded from the churches, and having no particular cure of ſouls, he took the univerſe for his pariſh; and thus, as he conceived, "Providence concurring with his word," he entered, divinely conducted, on his roving commiſſion. How far this reaſoning is juſt, may be left to the caſuiſts. We will not undertake to refute it. To him it was certainly ſatisfactory: and his conſcience being intereſted in it, it is pretty evident, that nothing leſs than an exertion of the legiſlative authority could have put a ſtop to his career.

Another reaſon for this conduct, tho' not mentioned here, may eaſily be traced, through a variety of his publications. The ſupineneſs, as he conceived, of many of the eſtabliſhed clergy, and their want of attention to the paſtoral cure, was, with him, a reaſon of great

importance, for purſuing the courſe he had adopted. As it was a delicate ſubject, he was in general cautious how he introduced it; and unleſs it were extorted from him, ſeldom mentioned them in terms of diſapprobation: but on ſome occaſions, he has more than hinted, that many of his brethren were "blind guides," and that the people were periſhing "for lack of knowledge."

One thing is pretty clear. Neceſſity alone can be a ſufficient plea for irregularity. Every deviation from eſtabliſhed cuſtoms, eſpecially in things that are held ſacred, muſt occaſion ſome ferment, and produce a ſhock in the body politic, not to be adventured, except an obvious and preſſing occaſion ſhall demand it. If Mr W-ſley's poſition be true, that, from the time of Charles II. a prince whom he deteſted above all others, every ſpecies

of wickedneſs was increaſing, and all religion upon the decline, or rather nearly extinct, till the affair of the "young gentlemen at Oxford," that occaſion preſented itſelf; and the general corruption demanded an extraordinary remedy. We hope, however, that the nation, at this period, was not in quite ſo bad a ſtate as he ſuppoſed. Elijah imagined that he ſtood alone, when there were no leſs than ſeven thouſand ſervants of the God of Iſrael: and when Mr Weſley, in a late diſcourſe, drew ſo melancholy a picture of the ſtate of religion in this country, previous to his commencing itinerant, it is not improbable, that his zeal might have exceeded his judgment, and that the colouring was copied, partly from nature, but perhaps, ſtill more, from his own imagination.

But of this enough. It has been obſerved, that preſſing occaſions can alone juſtify deviations from the common track. The queſtion is, whether the clergy of the preſent age have contributed, by their improper conduct, to furniſh ſuch an occaſion. Among the methodiſts, it is the general opinion, that they have. Such alſo ſeems to be the judgment of many of the diſſenters, and their miniſters; who are generally ſuppoſed, among their own friends, to be more exemplary in their deportment. But here, two conſiderations ſhould be taken into the account. The eſtabliſhed clergy are much more numerous than any other; and the diſſenting clergy are more dependent on their people: and this being conſidered, it may perhaps admit of a doubt, whether the latter, in proportion to their numbers, have not as many diſorderly

miniſters, as are to be found among the former; or at leaſt, whether ſuch inſtances would not be quite as frequent, were they as little dependent on their congregations. Some of our diſſenting brethren may perhaps ſmile at the obſervation; but it is ſaid, that, on the continent, the Engliſh clergy in general are conſidered as a grave and reſpectable body: and we are informed, that a French and an Engliſh clergyman, are as different as a harlequin and a quaker preacher.

Upon the whole, it has never been proved to our ſatisfaction, and we believe it is not true, that the clergy are, or have been, in any period of the preſent century, ſo generally immoral and corrupt, as is commonly ſuppoſed. We muſt however confeſs, that the inſtances are too frequent; and that all the clergy are not

ſuch as their profeſſion requires, nor competent, in ability or inclination, to the worthy diſcharge of their ſacred office. There are undoubtedly to be found, who are of opinion, that both to do and ſay, is too much in all conſcience; that a clergyman is like a hand-poſt; and that, if he ſhew the way, it is not neceſſary he ſhould walk in it himſelf. But pure doctrine and a diſorderly practice are ſeldom united. The diſcourſes of a bad man, at leaſt if they are the produce of his own labours, will ſcarcely be worth hearing: and he who has no concern for his own ſalvation, muſt be little qualified for the inſtruction of others.

It only remains to obſerve, under the article of irregularity, that another argument, in favour of it, has been drawn from the remote ſituation of many places in the country, which are at ſuch a diſ-

tance from all churches and chapels, as to render it almoſt impoſſible for the people to attend the regular clergy; ſo that, in matters of religion, they were reduced to an almoſt total ignorance and barbarity.

One of the eccentricities of methodiſm, and againſt which the public voice is almoſt unanimous, is field-preaching: though Mr Weſley and others have undertaken to defend it, as no breach of any known law, human or divine; as contrary to no principle of reaſon, and as infringing no man's natural rights. When firſt practiſed by Mr Whitefield and Mr Weſley, it's novelty attracted great multitudes, though it's ſingularity frequently excited diſguſt.

Could precedent confer propriety, it may be obſerved, that this cuſtom had been practiſed long before this æra, both

in Romiſh and Proteſtant countries. Many of the catholic prieſts, in Ireland, obſerve it to this day. And there was a time, when even the dignitaries of the church of England thought it no profanation, nor any thing derogatory to their dignity, to hold forth at St. Paul's Croſs, in the preſence of the tumultuous rabble, of the moſt noiſy and turbulent city in the world. Even Oxford has had it's field preachers. The author of the Eccleſiaſtical polity has frequently exhibited in her ſtreets: and it is well known, that, till very lately, the precincts of St. Mary Magdalen College have annually reſounded with declamations from the ſtone-pulpit. But theſe days are paſt. The ſtone-pulpit is cloſed; and the Baptiſt is defrauded of his annual tribute!

Some reſpect is certainly due to local cuſtom and public opinion. Long habit

acquires, in many inſtances, the ſanction of a law: and, above all, decency in divine worſhip, is indiſpenſible. It muſt be a moſt uncomfortable thing, and greatly diſtracting to a preacher and his audience, to be interrupted, in ſo ſolemn an act, by the rattling of coaches, and the oaths of the populace. Neceſſity ſeems to be the only ſufficient reaſon for field-preaching. Where there are places of worſhip, they ought undoubtedly to be preferred: and as this is univerſally the caſe with the the methodiſts, as well as the other ſects, in all probability, they will gradually forſake the fields, and quietly retire within their own houſes.

Another inſtance of irregularity, in the hiſtory of methodiſm, is preaching without notes. This is a natural effect of itinerancy, and perhaps, of the defective education of many itinerants. It is not

every one that can write a ſermon. What would not look ſo well upon paper, nor be ſo well attended to, if delivered with the deliberate articulation of a reader, may paſs much better in another form, and with the fire and animation of an extemporary addreſs. It may be added too, that their continual excurſions from place to place, render it almoſt impoſſible they ſhould write their diſcourſes: and if they had ſuch opportunities, it would be extremely inconvenient to carry them about. In a word, it ſeems abſolutely neceſſary, that every itinerant ſhall preach extempore.

Of the propriety or impropriety of this mode, we ſhall ſay little. Some are of opinion, that were it univerſally adopted by the clergy of every denomination, it would greatly tend to the improvement of religious knowledge; and that ſuch a

practice, rendering it impoſſible for any man to be a ſtated preacher, without a conſiderable acquaintance with divinity, it would render that ſtudy ſo much the more general, as it would be indiſpenſibly neceſſary to ſucceſs and eminence in the miniſtry.

The account Mr Weſley has given of the talents of his preachers, is juſt, though general. Some, he obſerves, were "of weak, others of remarkably ſtrong underſtanding." Many of them were under great diſadvantages, in point of education; and conſequently, were ſubject to perpetual blunders: and ſome either had, or affected to have, the moſt cordial contempt for learning; and ſeemed to think, that religion and ſcience were incompatible. From preachers of this claſs has proceeded all that ribaldry, and nonſenſe, and vociferation, which

they found themſelves under the neceſſity of ſubſtituting for information and argument.

But this was not a general character. Such as had a taſte for learning, were indefatigable in reading, and in ſeizing every method of improvement: and their attainments were, in ſome inſtances, very conſiderable, as well in letters and general knowledge, as in the purſuits immediately connected with the miniſtry. One inſtance Mr Weſley has given us, in the following paſſage, which is taken from one of his late ſermons: "I knew a man, about twenty years ago, who was ſo thoroughly acquainted with the Bible, that, if he was queſtioned concerning any Hebrew word in the Old, or Greek word in the New Teſtament, he would tell, after a little pauſe, not only how often the

one or the other occurred in the Bible, but alſo what it meant in every place. His name was Thomas Walſh." We ſuppoſe that here Mr Weſley only meant, any remarkable word; ſince, without this reſtriction, the anecdote could not poſſibly be true. This gentleman, who was an excellent Hebrew ſcholar, and a great maſter of biblical knowledge, died a martyr to itinerancy, at the early period of twenty-eight. Among the methodiſts, he has been much commended as a preacher; but his printed ſermons, of which there is a volume, are no very favourable ſpecimen of his abilities in this department. We have heard extemporary diſcourſes from ſeveral of Mr Weſley's preachers infinitely ſuperior, in elegance, and every other requiſite of compoſition, to his written ſermons. Whether this mode of ſpeaking in pub-

lic, be in general the moſt eligible or not, it is certainly the beſt adapted to the itinerant plan: and ſuch is the opinion entertained of it's utility, that it will, without doubt, be among the laſt things that will be ſuperſeded.

CHAP. VI.

Of the Influence of Methodism.

AMONG other ſubjects of enquiry concerning the progreſs of methodiſm, and not the leaſt important, is that which regards it's influence on ſociety: and this influence has been conſiderable. It has been attended, from the beginning, with a viſible reformation, in all ranks of people, particularly the moſt rude and uncultivated. The aſſiduity of the labourers in this vineyard, was the chief viſible cauſe of their ſucceſs. They did not confine themſelves to the public exerciſe of the miniſtry. They viſited from houſe to houſe. They mixed much

with the people, and frequently entered into ſuch converſation as was calculated to acquire their confidence, and confirm them in the doctrines they had embraced. The manners of the preachers were marked with a ſimplicity, highly pleaſing to the people among whom they laboured: and as the latter had no doubt, that in general, they were men of ſincere piety, their uncommon diligence in preaching, exhorting, and viſiting the ſick, had ſuch an effect upon the public, that they have conſtantly been increaſing, at the rate of ſeveral thouſands in the year.

The influence of methodiſm is no where more viſible than among the tinners in Cornwall, and the colliers in other parts of the kingdom. When in it's infancy, it was ſaid of Mr Whitfield, "if he will convert heathens, why does he not go to the colliers at Kings-

wood?" In 1739, he did ſo; and the effect was viſible. Till that time, ſcarcely any of them had ever attended a place of worſhip. It is no exaggeration to ſay, they were in every ſenſe of the word, as fierce and uncultivated, as in a civilized country, it is poſſible to conceive. Broils and quarrels without end, which were decided in the pugiliſtic mode, with the moſt ſavage brutality; the groſſeſt and vileſt impurities; and every ſpecies of vice, which can be perpetrated by a people, as void of education and refinement, as of every good principle, had rendered Kingſwood a proverb of infamy, a ſink of all ſorts of vulgarity and profaneneſs.

The only remedy that was found for theſe evils, was in the labours of the firſt methodiſts. The change that took place, was rapid, and extenſive. The moment

they became religious, their brutality ſubſided. In a few years, many thouſands of the colliers became well acquainted with the principles of religion; and the conſequent reformation of manners was more general, and more complete, than thoſe who knew them before could have ſuppoſed practicable.

Kingſwood, Cornwall, and the neighbourhood of Newcaſtle upon Tyne, in point of decency and morality among the labouring people, had been nearly upon a par: and it is remarkable, that in each of theſe places, methodiſm has been particularly ſucceſsful. The reformation in theſe places, may ſerve in ſome ſort, as a ſpecimen of what was done in other parts of the kingdom. The exact proportion of utility, it is impoſſible to aſcertain. It is ſufficient, that the character and manners of the hearers have been conſiderably im-

proved, and that immenſe multitudes who had been remarkable for their vicious and profane conduct, became exemplary in every ſpecies of piety and virtue. It is preſumed, none of the higher ranks will ſay, that ſuch a change was not for the better. Though gentlemen are often above being religious themſelves, they ſeem generally to have agreed, that it is very proper for the vulgar.

In this enquiry, impartiality demands, that we ſhould take notice of an objection. It has been frequently urged, that, though the methodiſts may be reformed from the groſſer vices, they are greatly prone to others, particularly to calumny. We think this is not generally true; though it is certainly more ſo, than the advocates for methodiſm will believe. There is, in the diſcipline itſelf, ſomething that has a tendency this way. They

are inſtructed to watch over one another, and to reprove every thing they ſuppoſe to be ſinful. The conſequence of which muſt neceſſarily be, that, as weak minds will often diſcover an evil where it does not exiſt; they will cenſure another for a handſome coat, a ruffle, or powdered hair, as ſome flagrant immorality; and will be ſubject to a frequent breach of charity in condemning others, for things perfectly indifferent. This however, will be chiefly among the ignorant. The liberal and well informed will be ſuperior to ſuch abſurdities; and in ſpite of all they have heard of the neceſſity of dreſſing like quakers, or rather in a ſtile far leſs elegant and becoming, they will perceive that religion muſt be of a higher nature; that it never can depend on a plain garb, or an unpowdered head; and that ſingular deviations from the cuſtom

of the country in which we live, are more properly arguments of bigotry and folly, than of propriety and good ſenſe. But the beginnings of almoſt all ſects, have been more or leſs diſtinguiſhed by an overſtrained preciſeneſs: and it may be expected, in due time, that an acceſſion of knowledge, producing an increaſe of charity, will pare away theſe excreſcences, and give, what is much wanted, the poliſh of candour and urbanity to the whole ſyſtem.

One diſtinguiſhed effect of methodiſm, is it's influence on the temporal concerns of the ſocieties. Many of the people, on their firſt union with Mr Weſley, were miſerably poor: and this poverty was occaſioned, in innumerable inſtances, by idleneſs and drunkenneſs, and other vices, which muſt be infinitely prejudicial to the affairs of every man, but eſpe-

cially of thoſe who are to earn their bread by the ſweat of their brow. Without relinquiſhing theſe vices, they could neither be admitted, nor continued in the ſocieties. The conſequence was highly advantageous. Multitudes, who in extravagance and diſſipation, had vied, as much as poſſible, with their ſuperiors, and had been accuſtomed to ſpend their wages in ale-houſes and cock-pits, and to leave their families to pine in indigence at home, were inſtructed to make a reputable proviſion for their ſupport. Habits of induſtry and frugality brought peace and plenty into their habitations. Inſtead of pawning and borrowing, as before, they were gradually enabled, not only to lend, but to give liberally to the neceſſities of others. This example was ſet them by Mr Weſley and other leading people; and they followed it with an

alacrity and perſeverance worthy ſo excellent a pattern. We know one ſociety alone, which collected annually, for the relief of the poor, from ſix to ſeven hundred pounds: and, were a calculation to be made of the ſums given away in the ſame proportion, in charities of different kinds, by methodiſts in other parts of the kindom, the ſum would be incredible. One excellent charity, to which they may be numbered among the moſt liberal benefactors, is the inſtitution of Sunday-ſchools. To this they have not only largely contributed, but they have done much more. They have obſerved a conduct, which few have imitated. They have condeſcended, without any reward, to become the teachers of theſe children, and to devote the intervals of worſhip to their inſtruction. An example, which, if generally follow-

ed, could not fail to have the happieſt effects, and to extend much more widely, the benign influence of this philanthropic inſtitution. It remains only to add, that the increaſe of induſtry and ſobriety, has been attended with the beſt influence on their affairs: ſo that, notwithſtanding their contributions to charities of all kinds, and their maintenance of ſuch a number of preachers, they are viſibly increaſing in wealth; and that, not by peculation and fraud, but by their attention to buſineſs, and their freedom from the diſſipation and luxury, ſo fatally prevalent in the preſent age.

To the good effects of methodiſm, already recited, may be added another: the progreſs of learning. It is obſerved, in the lower claſſes, that, except in ſome individuals more ambitious than the reſt, there is little inclination to learning;

and ſome particular object preſented to their view, can alone impel them to improve the mind, and to emerge from the ſupineneſs and ignorance of uncultivated nature. What no other principle could effect, is frequently accompliſhed by a taſte for religion. It has been ſeen in thouſands of inſtances: and a deſire to be acquainted with the ſcriptures has produced a love of letters, and an improvement in general knowledge, which muſt be of infinite utility, and bids fair for ſtill greater advances in ſcience, and conſequently, in every thing liberal and ornamental to human nature.

It will be remarked, by the judicious reader, that, in this view, we have chiefly confined ourſelves to the influence of methodiſm on morals. The reaſon is obvious. We certainly conſider it as a reformation; but we conceive it to be ſo,

not ſo much in opinion as in practice. Thoſe doctrines of methodiſm, which are peculiar, are either not true, or dubious, or indifferent; while thoſe, which are confeſſedly ſcriptural and juſt, are ſuch as they hold, not alone, but in common with chriſtians of other denominations. In this, it will be perceived, we materially differ from Mr Weſley, who frequently, in his diſcourſes from the pulpit, and, in a treatiſe written on purpoſe, complimented his people, on their ſingular purity of doctrine. It is natural to ſuppoſe, the ſyſtem we have embraced, to be more excellent than the reſt: but on this head, no man can be too diffident in his declarations: and the leader of a ſect, which himſelf has founded, ſhould eſpecially remember, that the queſtion of orthodoxy is an endleſs enquiry; that it is ſtill before the judges;

and, if we may guefs the future by the paſt, will never be actually decided, till that day, which ſhall "try every man's work," and determine of what "ſort it is."

CHAP. VII.

Controversies between Mr Wesley and others.

THE peculiarities of Mr Wesley, soon procured him a variety of opponents. Among these was Dr George Lavington, then bishop of Exeter. His "Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compared," is a lively, satyrical performance; in which the plan, though invidious, was well conceived; and the subject ensured it abundance of readers. To compare methodism with popery, was the surest way to render it detestable. The book was answered by Mr Wesley; who endeavoured to shew, that it was

more diſtinguiſhed by invective, than argument. But his Lordſhip was on the popular ſide; and the work ſoon ran through ſeveral editions. It was ſome time before Mr Weſley knew who was his antagoniſt: and it is remarkable, that he has treated the Biſhop more ſarcaſtically, and with leſs ceremony, than almoſt any other writer, with whom he was engaged. In this debate, we can ſometimes perceive a degree of indignation, which he ſeldom diſcovered, in any controverſy.

The moſt diſtinguiſhed of Mr Weſley's opponents was Dr Warburton; who, in his "Scripture Doctrine of Grace," treated him with his uſual roughneſs. The temper of this prelate was not amiable. His controverſial ſtyle might have better ſuited a colonel of pandours than a chriſtian biſhop: and though he exerted every effort to pour contempt upon his antagon-

iſt, this performance will reflect no great honour on the cauſe of chriſtianity. In the opinion of ſome, and it is ſaid to have been that of the famous Churchill, he explained away in that eſſay, a material branch of chriſtian doctrine. The ſatyriſt, who hated the biſhop, did not neglect the opportunity of exerciſing his talent. He ridiculed him upon the ſubject he had choſen, as having miſtaken his fort, and got out of his latitude. His ſtrictures on this ſubject are in every one's memory.

His Lordſhip was anſwered by Mr Whitefield and Mr Weſley; but by none with ſuch ſtrength of argument, as by the Reverend Mr Andrews, a clergyman in the neighbourhood of Tunbridge Wells. Beſides theſe, Mr Weſley drew his quill againſt Dr Free, Dr Middleton, Dr Taylor of Norwich, and ſeveral o-

thers: but the moſt virulent debate in which he ever engaged, was that which reſpected the Calvinian ſyſtem.

The differences between him and Mr Whitefield have been already noticed. Though Antipodes in ſentiment, they kept up at leaſt a decent civility. But after this gentleman's deceaſe, ſeveral of his followers, forgetting the moderation of which he ſet them an example, ſoon ſhewed by what ſpirit they were influenced, and flamed out at once, in all the rage and intolerance of their ſyſtem.

The firſt controverſy on the ſubject was with the celebrated Mr Hervey; a gentleman of much piety and learning, and of the mildeſt and moſt amiable manners. Mr Weſley had drawn up ſome objections againſt this gentleman's Dialogues of Theron and Aſpaſio: and the latter not ſatisfied with theſe

objections, which indeed did appear in a "queſtionable ſhape," prepared an anſwer in eleven letters. This anſwer was not publiſhed in Mr Hervey's life. It is ſaid, he gave orders, on his death-bed, that it ſhould be ſuppreſſed: and execrable was the zeal, which broke through ſo ſolemn an injunction.

In this work are evident marks of interpolation. The ſtyle is ſometimes very different from that of his other writings. But, above all, there is a bitterneſs and malignancy, which certainly was not the ſpirit of the gentle Hervey. The letters were republiſhed in Edinburgh by Mr Erſkine, and the prejudice they excited, was one cauſe of the little ſucceſs of methodiſm in Scotland.

The acrimony of this publication was but a prologue to the play. In the year 1770, Mr Weſley, having printed ſome

obſervations in the the minutes of conference, on the doctrine of merit; and, above all, having conſulted his preachers on the means of ſtopping "the plague," as he bluntly termed predeſtination; a circular letter was ſent by the late Mr Shirley, to the principal clergy of the Calviniſtic perſuaſion, inviting them to attend the next conference, and inſiſt on a formal recantation of this hereſy. Mr Weſley's conceſſions not being deemed ſatisfactory, they entered their proteſt, and began a moſt furious paper war, which was conducted by the late Mr Toplady, the two Mr Hills, and the Vicar of Everton.

The moſt humorous pamphlet, on this occaſion, was the 'Chriſtian World unmaſked,' of this laſt gentleman. It abounds with waggery; and among many ſhrewd obſervations, often couched

in ſatirical, and ſometimes in elegant language, there is a ſufficient proportion of inſinuations againſt "the old fox."

But this diſpute was more remarkable for it's wit, than it's urbanity. Mr Toplady was indiſputably a man of learning and abilities: but his talents wanted the charm of modeſty and candour. He publiſhed ſeveral pieces on the ſubject in debate, and, among the reſt, a tranſlation of Zanchius, an Eſſay on Fate and Neceſſity, and a work, which he conſidered as unanſwerable, entitled, "An hiſtoric View of the doctrinal Calviniſm of the Church of England." It conſiſts chiefly of extracts from various authors, many of whom were clergymen and biſhops, and ſome of them martyrs in the Marian perſecution. All theſe he ſuppoſes to be orthodox, or, in other words, Calviniſtic. But in this, and other tracts

of the party, we cannot but remark a circumſtance, too ſtriking to be overlooked. Wherever the writer finds a paſſage, in which the words "elect, election," and others of ſimilar import occur, he prints them in capitals or italics, and takes it for granted, they muſt mean unconditional election; which is the point to be proved: ſo that, very often, when he thinks he has accompliſhed the buſineſs, and preſented you with an irrefragable argument, it turns out, upon examination, to be, not an argument, but a *petitio principii.*

It were greatly to be wiſhed, there had been no other defect in this writer. But there was one, for which there can be no excuſe. He did not always recollect, that a clergyman ought to ſpeak and write like a gentleman, and a chriſtian. He betrayed a confidence in himſelf, not

to be equalled, but by his contempt of his antagoniſts: and his treatment of Mr Weſley was ſcurrilous to the laſt degree. To an ingenuous mind, nothing can be more ungrateful, than a review of this illiberal diſpute: and though, from this aſſemblage, we did intend to have culled ſome flowers for the reader's inſpection; on ſecond thoughts, we think it better to leave them to their merited oblivion. There is a mode of controverſy, in which "the conqueror is more infamous than the conquered *."

The moſt prolific, and by far the moſt polite writer on this occaſion, was the late Mr Fletcher; a Swiſs by birth, but a clergyman of the church of England, and vicar of Salop. The temper of this gentleman did not incline him to polem-

* Monthly Review for 1789, page 338.

ic divinity. He was devout and pious to a degree ſeldom equalled ſince the firſt ages of chriſtianity. But, when urged into the controverſy, by his love of truth, and his veneration for Mr Weſley, he ſhewed himſelf a complete maſter of his weapons: and, in his hands, the ableſt of his antagoniſts were like Lichas in the hands of Hercules. They ſunk into nothing in preſence of a man, who equally excelled in temper and in ſkill. He was charged by theſe gentlemen with illiberal ſarcaſm, and an uncandid repreſentation of their principles. But the charge was ill-founded. Mr Fletcher did not repreſent predeſtination in the moſt amiable point of view; but he depicted her as ſhe is. He diſrobed her of the meretricious ornaments her votaries had put upon her. He threw aſide the veil with which ſhe was covered; and, expoſing

her to public view, exhibited, not only the comforts of election, but thoſe alſo of preterition; and diſplayed the decree of reprobation ſtampt in indelible characters upon her forehead.

His ſucceſs was ſuch as might be expected. He convinced all but thoſe who would not be convinced. His arguments were unanſwerable: and he retired from the field, covered with well-earned glory, and crowned with victory. It was fortunate for Mr Weſley, who wrote a pamphlet or two on the occaſion, that the conduct of this war was taken off his hands; and that, aided by ſuch a coadjutor, he might ſtand aloof, a ſpectator of the combat, without engaging in it otherwiſe than he pleaſed; and he ſoon retired from the field, happy "in being ſucceeded by ſo able an auxiliary*."—

* Monthly Reviewers.

This gentleman's works, which make about eight volumes in octavo, deſerve the attention of every clergyman, not only as admirable models of controverſy, but as containing many curious and uſeful obſervations, on almoſt every branch of divinity. Mr Fletcher died in 1785: and it is hoped this controverſy is cloſed for ever.

Mr Weſley did not confine himſelf to religious diſcuſſion. In the beginning of the war in America, his character imbibed a ſtrong tincture of politics: and two ſermons *, he preached at this juncture, in the Foundery and Weſt-ſtreet Chapel, from the views they contained of the conduct of government, and the antiminiſterial ſpirit which they breathed, were very remarkable. A gentleman happening to aſk what he then thought

* From 2. Samuel, xv. 31. and Jeremiah xl. 6. 7.

of the public meaſures, was anſwered, "what ſhould I think? Oppreſſion will make a wiſe man mad." This is ſufficient to ſhew, that, at that period, he was decidedly averſe to the war.

Preſently after, he changed his ſentiments. His converſion was inſtantaneous. And what is moſt remarkable, in the hiſtory of this event, is that, ſudden as it was, it was abſolute and complete. Converted himſelf, his next care, was to convert his brethren: and, in this office, his zeal was indefatigable. He not only carried his ſentiments into all companies, and made them the ſubject of almoſt every converſation, but he eagerly diſplayed them in public; and the pulpit finiſhed what the table began. Some were pleaſed, and others diſguſted. For a time ſuch diſquiſitions, being novel, might have their charms; but the delirium laſt-

ed not long. When the firſt paroxiſm had a little ſubſided, the people awoke, as from a dream. They began to perceive, that their meeting-houſes had been converted into theatres of political diſquiſition, and were aſhamed and aſtoniſhed to reflect, that frequently, inſtead of worſhipping God, or attending to a religious diſcourſe, they had been liſtening to an old tale, a thouſand times repeated, of the king and the Americans. But in thoſe days, politics were all the rage: and even the pulpit was not ſacred from "the diſſentions and animoſities of mankind."

In this debate, Mr Weſley publiſhed a tract, under the title of "A calm Addreſs to the American Colonies." It had an aſtoniſhing run. But as it was taken, with little alteration, and without any acknowledgment, from a pamphlet of Dr

Johnſon, it brought a flood of obloquy upon him, and preſented his enemies an occaſion, they were not negligent to improve. By his old friend, Toplady, he was once more "tarred and feathered;" while a new antagoniſt, by proving he had read a book, which he denied ever to have ſeen, endeavoured publicly to convict him of a deliberate falſehood. The truth was, he had ſeen the book; but had totally forgot it: and perhaps moſt of us have been more than once in the ſame predicament. But where was the charity of this intention? or what advantage could it have been to the advocates for liberty, had he ſucceeded in proving his point?

We defend not Mr Weſley's conduct in theſe tranſactions: and it is impoſſible to defend it. It was imprudent in the higheſt degree. We mean not how-

ever to condemn him for having changed his ſentiments. He had a right to change them, if he ſaw reaſon to do ſo: but we cenſure his want of liberality. We condemn him for not allowing others the liberty he took himſelf; for thinking that every one ought to believe as he did; and for cenſuring thoſe who could not embrace his political opinions, as enemies of their king and country. How often this language was held, during the American war, is in the memory of thouſands. But the doctrine was falſe, as it was illiberal. Many, at leaſt, of the oppoſers of that war, were the friends of liberty. They were the friends of the nation; and their principles, however unfaſhionable, were the principles of the conſtitution.

Much as we diſapprove Mr Weſley's warmth on this occaſion, we muſt do ju-

ſtice to his integrity. The idea, that he was bribed by miniſtry, was without foundation. He neither received, nor meant to receive any thing: and we have heard, from good authority, that a living, which was offered, firſt to him, and afterwards to Mr Fletcher, was rejected by both.

In this diſpute, ſeveral pieces were publiſhed by Mr Weſley and this gentleman. The latter was the author of "Letters to Caleb Evans;" and the former, in an "Addreſs to the Inhabitants of Ireland," and "Obſervations on civil Liberty," in anſwer to Dr Price, zealouſly laboured to inculcate his opinions. In all his publications on theſe ſubjects, it will eaſily be perceived, that his principles are highly monarchical. They were ſtrictly conformable to thoſe in which he was educated; and he was pretty gener-

ally ſucceſsful in diſſeminating them among his people.

His laſt paper war, of any conſequence, was with Mr O'Leary, on the principles of the church of Rome, and the policy of the popery bill. It was no wonder, that a zealous proteſtant ſhould diſlike this bill, or that a catholic, equally zealous, ſhould conſider it with rapture, and eagerly vindicate the good old cauſe. Into the merits of that cauſe, we ſhall not loſe much time by enquiring. Perhaps the bill was a good one. Theſe are not the days of intolerance: and though we care not how little power is lodged in the hands of the catholics, we cordially wiſh them the moſt extenſive toleration.

The part Mr O'Leary took in this controverſy has been extolled to the ſkies. His liberality, and his argumentation

have been praiſed as ſomething more than human: and liberality is certainly commendable. But when were catholics in power, the patrons of toleration? What would the old gentleman at St. Peter's, or the aſſembly of the *propaganda fide*, have thought of ſuch ſentiments? And allowing a few individuals the liberality they aſſume, will this affect Mr Weſley's argument, and prove that it is not a principle of the church of Rome, to "keep no faith with heretics?" If we recollect right, his correſpondent never looked this argument in the face: and though we will not venture to ſay, that Mr Weſley's conſequence, which was, that the popery bill ought not to have paſſed, neceſſarily followed from his premiſes, we will ſay however, that in ſpite of all the efforts of his opponent, his chief argument remains untouched.

It is ſaid Mr O'Leary and Mr Berington are liberal, tolerant men. Perhaps they are. But is popery a tolerant religion? If it be, it muſt be ſtrangely altered! We ſuſpect with Dr Hales, that were the principles which pervade the writings of theſe apologiſts for the church of Rome, to be tranſlated into Spaniſh, Portugueſe, or Italian, they would be ſo far from being conſidered in theſe countries as the efforts of miſſionaries zealous in the catholic cauſe, that they would infallibly be prohibited by the *congregation of Index*, and publicly burnt. We can diſtinguiſh between the ſentiments of candid and judicious individuals, or of individuals who have a point to carry, and the general eſtabliſhed principles of a collective body: and we are the more particular, in theſe obſervations, becauſe we are informed, that, ſince the

bill paſſed, the catholics, in ſeveral parts of the kingdom, have been very buſy at their old trade of converting heretics; and the more effectually to ſecure an intereſt in heaven, are particularly aſſiduous in collecting numbers of proteſtant children, whoſe parents are poor, and ſending them to ſchools, where they are carefully inſtructed in reading, and writing——and popery!

CHAP. VIII.

Of his Writings in general.

HAVING paid ſome attention to the controverſial pieces of Mr Weſley, we now conſider his writings in general. But an accurate and diſtinct enumeration were impoſſible. Never was there, ſince the days of Richard Baxter, ſo voluminous a writer. Were all his publications originals, the number would be aſtoniſhing But this is not the caſe. They are chiefly extracts from various authors, and in every ſpecies of compoſition. Verſe and proſe, hiſtory, divinity, politics, languages, and philoſophy

have engaged his attention. Even novels have not eſcaped him: and Brookes' "Fool of Quality" has ſuffered an abridgment.

Mr Weſley had peculiar advantages as an author. He had a printing-office under his immediate inſpection. The celebrity of his name gave a rapid and extenſive ſale to his books; and the exertions of the preachers, many of whom had an intereſt in it, rendered the ſale ſtill more extenſive than it would otherwiſe have been. If we may gueſs from his continual printing, he wiſhed, as much as poſſible, to direct his people in the choice of their books; and took pains to inculcate his ſentiments, as well from the preſs, as from the pulpit.

Much of his own writings, is in divinity: and his largeſt work, is the "Notes on the Old and New Teſtament." They

are ſhort and conciſe; rather practical than critical, and written, as may be ſuppoſed, with a view to his peculiar doctrines. It is not clear, that what he once ſaid of them, that "they are calculated, not to prevent people from thinking, but to aſſiſt them," is ſtrictly, and univerſally juſt. If intended for the uſe of public perſons, they are too conciſe; and, if for families, they are equally liable to the ſame cenſure. Their true character is, they are briefly explanatory; with no great depth or ingenuity of criticiſm; and in general, without any ſuch helps toward a religious improvement, as are to be found in the more uſeful comments of Henry and Doddridge. Many difficult paſſages, in which a full and ample elucidation was neceſſary, are diſpatched with a brief hint: and too much is frequently left to the ingenuity of the read-

er. In a few places, particularly in the New Teſtament, he has taken the liberty to alter the text; and, in ſome inſtances, for the better. His notes on the Apocalypſe are chiefly from Bengelius. We notice the quarto edition of the notes on the New Teſtament, as the moſt elegantly printed book he ever publiſhed, and embelliſhed with one of the beſt of his early prints, that we have ſeen.

Next to this, his moſt diſtinguiſhed, and certainly his moſt laboured work, is the treatiſe on "Original Sin." We are informed, that this, though it did not convince him, procured the eſteem of his antagoniſt, Dr Taylor. It is almoſt the only effort of Mr Weſley, which has the air of a a regular treatiſe; and on which he has beſtowed the time and attention neceſſary for accurate inveſtigation. It is an animated defence of the orthodox doctrine,

in a deduction from the ſtate of morality in all ages; or as he expreſſes it, from "ſcripture, reaſon, and experience." Thoſe however, who ſhall look into it, for ſpecimens of abſtract reaſoning, will be diſappointed. But if any one has an inclination to ſee the dark ſide of human nature, and to know how corrupt the world is, and has been, this book is recommended to his particular attention.

An uſeful, and not the leaſt elegant of his publications, is the "Survey of the Wiſdom of God in the Creation." Much abuſe has been laviſhed on this work, by ſome who were judges, and by others, who were not, but ſpoke after their ſuperiors; chiefly for want of conſidering for whoſe uſe it was compiled. Some of theſe, who are ſo ignorant, as not to know to this day, that it is an extract from various authors, aſcribe it to Mr

Weſley, as an original work. If we may judge from the execution, it certainly was not intended for adepts, as a complete hiſtory of the preſent ſtate of philoſophical knowledge; for, in this view, it were materially defective: nor can it have been deſigned as a work merely elementary, and calculated for philoſophical pupils; but rather as a general view of the moſt uſeful and remarkable things in natural hiſtory, and an illuſtration, for common uſe, of the wiſdom and goodneſs of the Creator. Conſidered in this light, it is well entitled to the public approbation: and the moral reflections it contains, are as much diſtinguiſhed by their juſtneſs and elegance, as by their utility. Upon the whole, if not an accurate and complete, it is an uſeful and chriſtian compendium of philoſophy.

Of the hiſtorical labours of our author, we cannot ſpeak ſo favourably, as of his other compoſitions. The hiſtory of England is little more than a copy; and what is worſe, a mutilated copy of Goldſmith and Walpole: and, notwithſtanding the promiſes in the preface, it is neither a philoſophical, nor a religious hiſtory; nor, in thoſe parts, which are his own, has it any pretentions to originality, or to any of the requiſites for ſuch an undertaking.

The "Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory" is of the ſame claſs. It is a mere tranſcript from other writers, both in ſentiment and expreſſion: and ſo decided is the difference between his own language and the ſtyle of theſe hiſtories, that a reader of any taſte cannot fail to obſerve it; and muſt ſmile at their mutual diſſimilarity:

"ut turpiter atrum
Deſinat in piſcem mulier formoſa ſuperne!"

The only original part of this work, is the "Hiſtory of the People called Methodiſts:" and, in almoſt every excellence of narration, it is ſingularly deficient. It contains little or no reaſoning on the policy and principles of methodiſm. It affords little that is ſatisfactory to the philoſopher, the politician, or the divine. It does not develope the ſprings of human actions; nor does it deſcribe or vindicate the ſentiments he eſpouſed, in ſuch a manner as will ſatisfy a judicious enquirer. The beſt account we can give of this narrative, is, that it is a mere itinerary. It is a partial, contracted account, not of methodiſm, but of himſelf. But hiſtory was no province of his. He had no talent for political or philoſophical diſquiſition: and, whatever may be the fate of his other works, theſe two compoſitions ſtand little chance, ex-

cept among his own followers, of de-
ſcending to poſterity.

Among the political labours of Mr Weſley, may be ranked his "Thoughts on Slavery." He was one of the earlieſt writers on a ſubject, which has lately undergone ſo complete an inveſtigation; and in which the public have been, for ſome time, ſo deeply intereſted. This pamphlet does him great credit. Though it does not diſcover that extent of information, and that accuracy of detail, which is obſervable in Mr Clarkſon, and others, who have gone over the ſame ground, he has treated it with great ſpirit and impartiality. But, as might naturally be ſuppoſed, in a gentleman of his ſentiments, he has conſidered it chiefly in a moral and religious view; not on the mere footing of political expediency, but on principles of equity and natural

juſtice: and it is ſuppoſed, that this eſſay had a powerful influence on ſome of the American ſtates, in their late regulations concerning the trade to Africa.

As a piece of polemic divinity, his "Predeſtination calmly conſidered," is of diſtinguiſhed excellence. It is a model of controverſy, clear and cogent; conciſe and argumentative; and the more convincing, becauſe the ſpirit, in which it is written, is as amiable, as the reaſoning is unanſwerable. Perhaps, there is not, in the Engliſh language, a treatiſe, which contains, in ſo ſmall a compaſs, ſo full and maſterly a refutation of the principle he oppoſes. It does credit to his judgment, that he ſo early eſpouſed, and ſo ably defended the mild and moderate ſyſtem of Arminius. The Father of Mercies, reprobating millions of his creatures, before they exiſted, is a contradiction in

terms: and he preſently ſaw it's abſurdity.

In 1777, Mr Weſley engaged in a periodical work, called the "Arminian Magazine." To give it a juſt character, were no eaſy taſk. It is a ſtrange medley of heterogeneous matter, on all ſorts of ſubjects. Part of it is dedicated to extracts in favour of general redemption; another part to ſermons by Mr Weſley, and religious letters from his correſpondents; and a ſnug corner is reſerved for witches and apparitions. The ſale of this work is a remarkable proof of the authority of his name. Standing, as it did, under every poſſible diſadvantage; groaning under the load of a religious controverſy, of which every one had been long weary; of hundreds of letters, dull as dullneſs itſelf, and with ſcarcely any variation, either of ſentiment or expreſſion;

this magazine, with little pretenſion to literary merit, is in great demand; many thouſands have been annually diſpoſed of, and the demand is continually increaſing. How long this will be the caſe, it is hard to ſay. Whenever it ſhall depart this life, it will not meet an untimely end: and unleſs it alter greatly for the better, it's diſſolution will be no loſs to the republic of letters.

Among the original works of Mr Weſley, are his ſermons, in eight volumes: the laſt four of which were chiefly compoſed for the Arminian Magazine, and collected and republiſhed in 1788. The merit of theſe diſcourſes is various. In general, the laſt volumes are much ſuperior to the firſt, both in matter and in expreſſion. They are more informing, as well as more ſprightly and entertaining; tho' ſome critics will object to the frequent

citations from the poets. In theſe diſcourſes, dreſs, early riſing, and a variety of ſimilar regulations are much inſiſted on: and though they are ſubjects not commonly introduced into the pulpit, the ſermons, which treat of theſe, are by no means the leaſt ingenious.

The laſt of his works, which we ſhall mention, is "the Appeal to Men of Reaſon and Religion." This is eſteemed one of his moſt ſtudied and argumentative publications. To ſay the leaſt, it is, what he intended, an able defence of his ſyſtem and his general conduct: and whoever wiſhes either to vindicate, or to attack methodiſm, ſhould, by all means, make himſelf maſter of this work.

Of the fifty volumes of the "Chriſtian Library," conſiſting chiefly of extracts from authors of the laſt century, and intended as a body of divinity for the uſe

of the preachers, as well as the people, we ſhall only ſay, many of the volumes are ſo dull, that we have never been able to wade through them: and of the vaſt variety of ſmall pamphlets, which Mr Weſley publiſhed, the reader will eaſily judge, no particular account can be given, when he is informed, that the number, excluſive of the Arminian Magazine, is upwards of two hundred and ſixty. Among theſe are the Hymns on different occaſions, written chiefly by Mr Charles Weſley, which are very numerous, and which we diſmiſs, with obſerving, that the "Funeral and Scripture Hymns" are in general the beſt.

The character of Mr Weſley, as a writer, has never yet been appreciated. Among his own people, it has been eſteemed perhaps too highly: with the reſt of the world, his peculiar ſentiments,

and ſome political pamphlets, which were obnoxious to multitudes of readers, have contributed to ſet it too low.

In point of ſtyle, his moſt diſtinguiſhing character is conciſeneſs. He abhorred circumlocution: and conſtantly endeavoured to ſay every thing in the fewеſt words. Hence he was ſometimes abrupt: and the ſententious turn of his expreſſions, gave now and then a ſort of bluntneſs to his writings, and ſuperſeded that air of elegance and eaſe, which, accompanied with a becoming brevity, is peculiarly pleaſing. His conciſeneſs, however, did not prevent his perſpicuity. Early accuſtomed to diſtinction, he knew how to ſeparate ideas apparently ſimilar; and his long habit of conſidering every ſubject in it's moſt ſimple and direct view, was the true reaſon, that he rarely fell into obſcurity.

It appears, from ſome expreſſions in the preface to his late ſermons, that he was conſcious of a talent in writing, which certainly does not appear in his works; and which, in our opinion, was ſcarcely conſiſtent, either with his temper or his genius. He ſays, that he "could write as floridly and rhetorically as the admired Dr Blair!" But the florid is not the ſtyle of Blair; which is rather diſtinguiſhed by a chaſte, claſſic elegance; and does not labour under that profuſion of ornament and figure, by which florid writers are diſtinguiſhed. Nor was he calculated for an imitation of the rhetoric of this author. What he might have done in his youth, we will not ſay. Had he chiefly dedicated himſelf to the profeſſion of authorſhip, and paid the attention neceſſary to elegance of compoſition, it is more than probable

he might have ſucceeded. But this was not the caſe. He valued himſelf too much on logic, to pay ſufficient attention to the ornamental part of fine writing. As for rhetoric, he always appeared to think too meanly of the art, and to hold it in a degree of contempt, by no means worthy ſo excellent an underſtanding.

This remark will receive additional confirmation from a well known anecdote. When Junius appeared, Mr Weſley offered his ſervices, and propoſed to adminiſtration, to anſwer him; and, ſaid he, "I will ſhew the difference between rhetoric and logic." The propoſal was not accepted: and Junius, though frequently attacked, is to this moment unanſwered. Nor is it at all probable, that Mr Weſley would have ſucceeded in the attempt. Logic is not all that is requi-

ſite in a political writer. Conviction does not neceſſarily imply perſuaſion: and the elegant diction, the impoſing and inſinuating ſtyle of ſome writers, particularly, if accompanied with the epigrammatic ſmartneſs and pungency of a Junius, will be more than a match for the argumentation of all the mere reaſoners in the univerſe.

Thoſe, who are in ſearch of the chief excellence of Mr Weſley, as an author, muſt look for it in his controverſial writings. His fort was argument: and his ſuperior ſkill in this ſcience, gave him a decided advantage over moſt of his opponents. He availed himſelf, with equal eaſe, of fair and direct argumentation, and of the fallacies and ſubtilties of the art: and he knew how to conceal thoſe ſubtilties from the eye of a common obſerver. The moſt palpable fallacy we re-

member in his writings, is in a debate on chriſtian perfection. And this, ſay his antagoniſt, "is Mr Weſley's perfection!" No, replies he; "have I not declared, over and over, that I am not perfect?" He only meant, this was the perfection he inculcated. Mr Weſley, by ſhifting the terms of the propoſition, evaded the argument, and replied to it, as if it meant this was the perfection he profeſſed to have attained!

His love of brevity ſometimes led him aſtray. He often ventured upon aſſertion without proof. The tutor was in many of his writings too conſpicuous: a fault into which he was betrayed, in ſome meaſure perhaps, by his conſciouſneſs of the truth and propriety of the ſentiments he had eſpouſed, and partly, by the ſuperior deference to which he was ſo long accuſtomed.

It will frequently ſtrike an attentive obſerver, that though there is in his writings great force and energy, as well as much perſpicuity, yet of the ſublime and pathetic beauties of compoſition, there are few, if any examples. He often ſucceeded in deſcription, and ſometimes in ridicule: but he ſeldom impreſſes the mind with the tender and impaſſioned emotions.

Upon the whole, he was a laborious, uſeful writer. His works have done infinite good: and though he will ſcarcely rank in the firſt claſs of Engliſh authors, his name will deſcend to poſterity, with no ſmall ſhare of reſpectability and applauſe. If uſefulneſs be excellence; if public good is the chief object of attention, in public characters; and if the greateſt benefactors to mankind are moſt eſtimable,

Mr John Wesley will long be remembered as one of the best of men, as he was for more than fifty years the most diligent and indefatigable.

CHAP. IX.

A Review of his Character.

THE character of eminent perſons, who have gone before us, is of courſe an object of the public attention. It may be added, and deſervedly ſo. When the tenor of a virtuous and uſeful life is crowned with a correſpondent end, death ſets his ſeal upon the departed, and gives the rivet of eternity to his virtues. It may be obſerved alſo, that, though it be proper, and even neceſſary to public utility, to draw men, not as they ought to be, but as they are; and to point out the faults, as well as the excellencies of thoſe, whoſe actions may be eſteemed

worthy the attention of mankind, we are however, to judge of their character, not ſo much by particular circumſtances, as by the general tenor of their conduct.

From the relation already given of his general views, and of the tranſactions, in which he bore ſo diſtinguiſhed a part, our readers can ſcarcely fail to have formed ſome judgment of Mr Weſley's character. But, without perſonal obſervation, a juſt and accurate idea were impoſſible. And as the opinions of mankind, concerning him, are as oppoſite as light and darkneſs, we ſhall endeavour to preſent our readers with a full and complete view of this extraordinary perſon.

The figure of Mr Weſley was remarkable. His ſtature was of the loweſt: his habit of body in every period of life, the reverſe of corpulent, and expreſſive of

ſtrict temperance, and continual exerciſe: and notwithſtanding his ſmall ſize, his ſtep was firm, and his appearance, till within a few years of his death, vigorous and muſcular. His face, for an old man, was one of the fineſt we have ſeen. A clear, ſmooth forehead, an aquiline noſe, an eye the brighteſt and the moſt piercing that can be conceived, and a freſhneſs of complection, ſcarcely ever to be found at his years, and impreſſive of the moſt perfect health, conſpired to render him a venerable and intereſting figure. Few have ſeen him, without being ſtruck with his appearance: and many, who had been greatly prejudiced againſt him, have been known to change their opinion, the moment they were introduced into his preſence. In his countenance and demeanour, there was a chearfulneſs mingled with gravity; a ſprightlineſs,

which was the natural reſult of an unuſual flow of ſpirits, and was yet accompanied with every mark of the moſt ſerene tranquility. His aſpect, particularly in profile, had a ſtrong character of acuteneſs and penetration.

In dreſs, he was a pattern of neatneſs and ſimplicity. A narrow, plaited ſtock, a coat with a ſmall upright collar, no buckles at his knees, no ſilk or velvet in any part of his apparel, and a head as white as ſnow, gave an idea of ſomething primitive and apoſtolical: while an air of neatneſs and cleanlineſs was diffuſed over his whole perſon.

His rank, as a preacher, is pretty generally underſtood. His attitude in the pulpit was graceful and eaſy; his action calm and natural, yet pleaſing and expreſſive: his voice not loud, but clear

and manly; his ſtyle neat, ſimple, perſpicuous: and admirably adapted to the capacity of his hearers.

His diſcourſes, in point of compoſition, were extremely different, on different occaſions. When he gave himſelf ſufficient time for ſtudy, he ſucceeded; and when he did not, he frequently failed. A clear proof, that the employments, in which he was engaged, were too numerous, and the œconomy, to which he gave himſelf up, too tedious and minute, for a man who generally appeared in the pulpit twice or thrice a-day. We have frequently heard him, when he was excellent; acute and ingenious in his obſervations, accurate in his deſcriptions, and clear and pointed in his expoſitions. Not ſeldom however have we found him the reverſe. He preached too frequently; and the conſequence

was inevitable. On ſome occaſions, the man of ſenſe and learning was totally obſcured. He became flat and inſipid. His obſervations were trite and common; his expoſitions of ſcripture forced and unnatural, and the whole ſubſtance of his ſermons diſjointed and out of courſe. He often appeared in the pulpit, when totally exhauſted with labour and want of reſt: for, wherever he was, he made it a point to preach, if he could ſtand upon his legs. Many have remarked, that when he fell into anecdote and ſtory-telling, which was not ſeldom, his diſcourſes were little to the purpoſe. The remark is true. We have ſcarcely ever heard from him a tolerable ſermon, in which a ſtory was introduced. Whether he obſerved this cuſtom in his youth, we are not informed; but it has been generally conſidered, as an infirmity of

"garrulous old age;" a mixture of the familiar with the ſacred, little worthy the dignity of the pulpit; and tho' very proper, and perhaps uſeful in common life, by no means fit for the inſtruction or entertainment of a judicious audience.

The conſtant employment of Mr Weſley, in writing letters, or compoſing, or viſiting the ſick, was not the only reaſon he ſometimes did not ſucceed in public. He ſeems to have thought too little of the preparation, which, in an extemporary ſpeaker, is indiſpenſibly neceſſary. He regarded the general diſcipline and œconomy of the ſocieties, as of the greateſt moment and difficulty, and the public exerciſe of his miniſtry, as the leaſt arduous part of his office: and he informs us in one place, that he could "preach three or four times a day, without any

trouble;" but that the care of the ſocieties was a burden he could "ſcarcely bear."

Never was the contraſt greater between public characters, than between Mr Weſley and Mr Whitefield. The former, when he was himſelf, had an eaſy fluency of expreſſion, and an addreſs and manner particularly chaſte and natural. He was often logical and convincing, and ſometimes deſcriptive: but he never ſoared into ſublimity, or deſcended into the pathetic. His ſtyle was the calm, equal flow of a placid ſtream, gliding gently within it's banks, without the leaſt ruffle or agitation upon it's ſurface. The eloquence of Mr Whitefield was of another kind. It was more various; and yet, with all it's variety, in him, it was ſtrictly natural. He was a preacher, who alternatly thundered and lightened

upon his audience; now filling them with terror, and now touching and affecting them wtih all the ſofter and more pleaſing emotions. He knew how to inſpire them with whatever paſſion he was deſirous to call forth; and the ſmiles or tears of his hearers were equally at his command. Though not ſo accurate a ſpeaker as Mr Weſley, he was more popular. He had a louder and more muſical voice; his tones were more varied; his action much more diverſified, and his whole addreſs in public, was that of a maſter in all the arts of popularity. Mr Weſley preached to the learned; Mr Whitefield to the people. The former gave more ſatisfaction to a critical hearer; but the latter was a greater favourite with the public. This was evident in their reſpective congregations. Each was accuſtomed to the largeſt aſſemblies in the

nation: but the difference was conſiderable. Mr Whitefield's congregations were frequently twenty or thirty thouſand: Mr Wesley's ſcarcely ever amounted to one third of the number.

Many have repreſented him as a man of ſlender capacity; but certainly with great injuſtice. Of the futility of ſuch repreſentations, his writings, particularly thoſe which are controverſial, are a ſufficient proof. To this may be added, the office he filled with ſuch diſtinction at Oxford, and his great addreſs in the management of his people. As a ſcholar, he was certainly reſpectable. He was well acquainted with the Latin and Greek claſſics; and had a tolerable knowledge of the Hebrew, as well as of French, German, Spaniſh, and Italian. He had ſtudied Euclid, during his reſidence in college, and had attended with a good

deal of aſſiduity the philoſophic lectures. In philoſophy however, he was a ſceptic. He did not believe in any ſyſtem. He denied the calculations of the planetary diſtances, and the plurality of worlds. But his philoſophical knowledge ſeems to have been rather general, than profound; and in his anſwers to an opponent who attacked him in the papers on theſe ſubjects, we diſcover no deep research, no acuteneſs; in a word, nothing that can incline us to ſuppoſe, he had made himſelf maſter of the arguments, for, or againſt the different ſyſtems, which have been adduced by the various advocates, or that he had formed any new arguments of of his own.

To ſuppoſe him no very profound philoſopher, is no impeachment of his capacity. We have never yet found a man who excelled in every thing: and he who

attempts every thing, muſt in many inſtances, be ſuperficial. In philoſophical enquiries, a minute and critical attention, frequent repetition of experiment and obſervation, and the moſt patient ſpirit of inveſtigation, are abſolutely neceſſary to diſtinguiſhed eminence and ſucceſs: and we need not ſay, that, to all theſe, the genius and employments of Mr Weſley were inſuperably averſe.

As a writer, he certainly poſſeſſed talents, both from nature and education, which, had he compoſed with care, and allowed himſelf ſufficient time, could ſcarcely fail to have procured him a conſiderable reputation. But writing, as he did, on the ſpur of particular occaſions, he often diſmiſſed his pieces in a crude, imperfect ſtate, and defective in accuracy and extent of information; which, in the preſent ſtate of knowledge, cannot

be diſpenſed with, in candidates for literary fame.

In the bloom of youth, his taſte ſeems to have been more juſt and diſcriminating than in his more mature age: whence we conclude, that either the company, with whom he converſed, or the books which he chiefly read, after his commencing itinerant, were not favourable to elegance and refinement. We have ſeen nothing of his, equal to the tranſlations of Horace, which he wrote in his youth. And it is remarkable, that his eſſay on taſte, and his criticiſms on Pope and Prior, publiſhed in the Arminian Magazine, are jejune, trifling, and contradictory.

In ſocial life, Mr Weſley was lively and converſible; and of exquiſite companionable talents. He had been much accuſtomed to ſociety; was well acquainted with the rules of good breeding; and,

in general, perfectly attentive and polite. The abſtraction of a ſcholar did not appear in his behaviour. He ſpoke a good deal in company: and, as he had ſeen much of the world, and, in the courſe of his travels, through every corner of the nation, had acquired an infinite fund of anecdote and obſervation, he was not ſparing in his communications; and the manner in which he related them, was no inconſiderable addition to the entertainment they afforded.

His manner, in private life, was the reverſe of cynical or forbidding. It was ſprightly and pleaſant, to the laſt degree; and preſented a beautiful contraſt to the auſtere deportment of many of his preachers and people, who ſeem to have ranked laughter among the mortal ſins. It was impoſſible to be long in his company, without partaking his hilarity. Nei-

ther the infirmities of age, nor the approach of death, had any apparent influence on his manners. His chearfulneſs continued to the laſt; and was as conſpicuous at fourſcore, as at one and twenty.

A remarkable feature in Mr Weſley's character, was his placability. His temper was naturally warm and impetuous. Religion had, in a great degree, corrected this; though it was by no means eradicated. Generally indeed, he preſerved an air of ſedateneſs and tranquility, which formed a ſtriking contraſt to the livelineſs, ſo conſpicuous in all his actions. Perſecution from without, he bore not only without anger, but without the leaſt apparent emotion. But it was not the caſe in conteſts of another kind. Oppoſition from his preachers or people he could never brook. His authority he

held ſacred; and, when that was called in queſtion, we have known him repeatedly tranſported into a high degree of indignation. But what he ſaid of himſelf was ſtrictly true. He had a great facility in forgiving injuries. Submiſſion, on the part of an offender, preſently diſarmed his reſentment, and he would treat him with great kindneſs and cordiality. If he ever deviated from this amiable conduct, we aſcribe it not to him. It was foreign to himſelf. It aroſe from the miſrepreſentations of ſycophants, by one or other of whom, in his latter days, he was perpetually beſieged.

The temperance of Mr Weſley was extraordinary. In early life, he ſeems to have carried it too far. Whether there were ſome particular reaſons, in his caſe, as ſome have ſuppoſed, from warmth of conſtitution, or from any other cauſe,

which might induce him to think it neceſſary, it were too much, without proper authority, to determine. However this may be, he was for many years, temperate to an exceſs. Even Dryden's pariſh prieſt did not exceed him. He made "almoſt a ſin of abſtinence."

The practice of faſting, with other inſtances of ſelf denial, he began at college, when about three or four and twenty. And as old men generally retain a partiality for the cuſtoms of youth, ſo Mr Weſley, when obliged, for the ſake of his health, to obſerve a more generous regimen, did not fail to inculcate, both in public and private, the moſt rigid temperance. An œconomy, which poſſibly might ſuit ſome few conſtitutions; but, to the majority of mankind, muſt be dangerous, if not fatal. And it is particularly obſerved, that there is no period of

life, in which a generous diet is more neceſſary, than when the body is advancing to maturity.

Among other things, he was particular in the article of ſleep. One of his maxims was, "without faſting and early riſing, it is impoſſible to grow in grace." With ſuch views, we need not wonder, that he was ſo attentive to this himſelf, and ſo aſſiduous and peremptory in enforcing it on others. His notion of ſleep cannot be better explained, than in his own words:

"Healthy men require a little above ſix hours ſleep; healthy women a little above ſeven, in four and twenty. If any one deſires to know exactly what quantity of ſleep his own conſtitution requires, he may very eaſily make the experiment which I made about ſixty years ago. I then waked every night about twelve or

me, and lay awake for some time. I readily concluded, that this arose from my being longer in bed than nature required. To be satisfied, I procured an alarum, which waked me the next morning at seven (near an hour earlier than I rose the day before) yet I lay awake again at night. The second morning I rose at six; but notwithstanding this, I lay awake the second night. The third morning I rose at five; but nevertheless, I lay awake the third night. The fourth morning I rose at four, as, by the grace of God, I have done ever since. And I lay awake no more. And I do not now lie awake, taking the year round, a quarter of an hour together in a month. By the same experiment, rising earlier and earlier every morning, may any one find, how much sleep he really wants."

Toward the close of life, he relaxed a little. The sleep he had allowed himself, was not sufficient; so that he was obliged, after dinner, to take a nap in his chair. For some years before his death, he lived, as every man ought, who can afford it, generously, yet temperately. He took two or three glasses of wine after dinner, and two after supper: and eat heartily, and with a good appetite. We much doubt whether he ever drank a pint of wine, at one sitting, in his whole life: and this regularity was rewarded with such a vigour of constitution, as scarcely any one has known but himself. In thirty-five years he never kept his bed one day. In his youth indeed, he was subject to the tooth-ach, and, in his latter years, to the cramp: but, upon the whole, his health was firm and robust, to the utmost degree that can

be conceived. Twice or thrice in his life, in conſequence of ſevere colds, and exceſſive labour, he was ſuppoſed to be conſumptive. He had alſo two or three fevers; which however, ſeem rather to have ſtrengthened than impaired his conſtitution. By a violent ſhock againſt the pummel of his ſaddle, he contracted a hydrocele, for which he underwent ſeveral operations. But, in June 1775, being ſeized, in the north of Ireland, with a ſevere fever, it effectually cured him of this complaint.

Perhaps the moſt charitable man in England, was Mr Weſley. His liberality to the poor knew no bounds. He gave away, not merely a certain part of his income, but all that he had. His own neceſſities provided for, he devoted all the reſt to the neceſſities of others. This is a good work, in which he engaged at a

very early period. In the seventh volume of his sermons, is an account of the charities of one of the first methodists. The name is not mentioned: but we suppose it to be spoken of himself. "When he had thirty pounds a year, he lived on twenty-eight, and gave away forty shillings. The next year, receiving fifty pounds, he still lived on twenty-eight, and gave away two and thirty. The third year he received ninety pounds, and gave away fifty-two. The fourth year, he received a hundred and twenty pounds. Still he lived on twenty-eight, and gave to the poor ninety-two." In this ratio he proceeded during the reft of his life: and we are perſuaded, that, upon a moderate calculation, he gave away, in about fifty years, twenty or thirty thouſand pounds; which, almoſt any other than himſelf, would have taken care

to put out at intereſt, upon good ſecurity. Had the money, he gave away fallen into the hands of ſome of his principal favourites, and were they to live as long as he did, the ſum would certainly have accumulated to ſixty or ſeventy thouſand pounds.

Mr Weſley's charity had the fate, in ſome inſtances, to be miſinterpreted. Some years ago, appeared in the metropolis, Eraſmus, biſhop of Crete. His epiſcopal character in the Greek church, was authenticated by a letter from the Patriarch of Smyrna; who added, that the Turks had driven him from his ſee, for baptizing a muſſulman into the faith of Chriſt. That Mr Weſley's known liberality ſhould induce him to be kind to this venerable ſtranger, it is eaſy to conceive; but the report, circulated in the Goſpel Magazine, and other publications

of that period, that forty guineas had been offered him by Mr Charles Weſley, to make his brother a biſhop, has no appearance of probability. To have wiſhed for ſo unſubſtantial a thing as a Greek conſecration, does no credit, either to his head or his heart; and is indeed as little likely, as the aſſertion of a certain reverend gentleman, that no one knew "whether the ſaid biſhop was a pick-pocket, or a wandering Jew," was liberal and chriſtian. But ſome people will never learn to keep within the bounds of decency. It is to be obſerved, that ſeveral of Mr Weſley's preachers were ordained by this Biſhop. This muſt have been a curious ordination: and when it is conſidered, that neither did the Biſhop underſtand Engliſh, nor his candidates Greek, we may preſume, that the examination, and the reſt of the ceremony, on that occa-

ſion, muſt have been particulary inſtructive and intereſting!

The travels of Mr Weſley were inceſſant; and almoſt without a precedent. Brainerd, the miſſionary to the American Indians, and Xavier, the apoſtle of the Eaſt, ſeem more nearly to have reſembled him in this inſtance, than any miniſter we have heard of, in ancient or modern times. His prodigious labours, without great punctuality and care in the management of his time had been impoſſible. He had ſtated hours for every purpoſe. His times of buſineſs and relaxation, were not ſuffered to interfere with each other. He retired to reſt between nine and ten, and roſe ſoon after four: and no company, no converſation, however pleaſing; in ſhort, nothing but ſtern neceſſity could induce him to relax. His rules were like the laws of the Medes and Perſians,

abſolute and irrevocable. He wrote, he travelled, he viſited the ſick, he did every thing in certain hours, which he had preſcribed for himſelf: and thoſe hours were inviolable.

To determine the preciſe meaſure of Mr Weſley's labours, were too much to attempt. His public miniſtrations were but a part of them: but from theſe we may form ſome conception of the reſt. During fifty two years, he generally delivered two ſermons a day; very frequently four or five. Calculating therefore, at twice a day, and allowing fifty ſermons annually for extraordinary occaſions, which is the loweſt computation that can be made, the whole number, in fifty two years, will be forty thouſand, four hundred and ſixty. To theſe may be added an infinite number of exhortations to the ſocieties, after preaching,

and other occaſional meetings at which he aſſiſted.

In his younger days, he travelled on horſeback. He was a hard, but unſkilful rider; and his ſeat was as ungraceful, as it appeared uneaſy. With a book in his hand, and his hands up to his head, he frequently rode from fifty to ſixty or ſeventy miles a day: and from a ſtrange notion he had taken up, of riding with the bridle on his horſe's neck, many were the tumbles they had together. Of his travels, the loweſt calculation we can make, is four thouſand miles annually, which, in fifty-two years, will give two hundred and eight thouſand miles. An almoſt incredible degree of labour; and which nothing, but the beſt conſtitution, informed by the moſt active ſpirit, could have enabled him to ſupport!

Of the fatigue of writing we think not ſo much. In original compoſition, there is a pleaſure, which none but writers know. Had he indeed copied the books he abridged, it were a miſerable drudgery! But he took a much ſhorter method. He juſt looked over his author, and drew his pen acroſs the paſſages he diſapproved; and this with ſo little accuracy, that he frequently left ſentiments directly contrary to his own principles.

The temper of Mr Weſley was as diſintereſted, ſo far as related to money, as it was charitable. Every one knows the apoſtrophes in which, more than once, he addreſſed the public on this ſubject; declaring, that his own hands ſhould be his executors; that, though he gained all he could by writing, and waſted not even ſo much as a ſheet of paper; yet, by giving all he could, he was effectually

preſerved from laying up "treaſures upon earth;" and that, if he died worth above ten pounds, independent of his books, and the arrears of his fellowſhip, he would give the world leave to call him "a thief and a robber." In this, as all who knew him expected, he has kept his word. His carriage and horſes, his clothes, and a few trifles of that kind, are all, his books excepted, that he has left. The value of the books may be eaſily aſcertained. But their value is of no ſort of conſequence; ſince they are entirely left to the conference; his relations deriving no advantage from them, except a rent charge of eighty-five pounds, to be paid to his brother's widow, during her life. If he even had acquired a fortune by his writings, we ſee no impropriety in it. As things are, we commend his diſintereſted conduct. Had they been other-

wiſe, we ſhould not have condemned him.

Among other excellencies of Mr Weſley, we cannot but remark the general moderation of his controverſial pieces. Never was there a more ſcurrilous race, than the greater part of his antagoniſts. Mr Church and a Mr Thompſon, with perhaps one or two more, are the only diſputants he engaged with, who preſerved the temper and manners, we will not ſay of chriſtians, but of gentlemen. Conſidering the illiberal behaviour of theſe diſciples of Zoilus, we almoſt wonder he ſhould have honoured them with a reply. The little roughneſs which now and then appears in his writings, was certainly nothing, in compariſon of the provocation: and, for the moſt part, when he "ſcourged them with whips, he ſhould have laſhed them with ſcorpions:" Whether

fond of controverſy or not, he was forced into it; and what he ſaid of one, was true of moſt of his opponents: "torquebis, ut vapules." They teazed him into debate; and he generally diſmiſſed them with a ſound drubbing.

Mr Weſley poſſeſſed, during his whole life, a contempt of infidels and free-thinkers, which ſome may conceive, bordered upon aſperity. Infidelity was frequently the ſubject of his ſatire. In converſation and in public, he delighted to attack it; and many of his remarks were lively and convincing. But his oppoſition, now and then ſavoured of illiberality; nor does he ſeem to have had juſt conceptions of the proper antidote. "A pert, ſhallow, conceited infidel, two degrees below Voltaire," is neither proper language, nor in any reſpect deſcriptive of the elegant and ingenious Rouſſeau. We

diſlike his infidelity: but we revere his eloquence and his genius. The circulation of ſtories, concerning witchcraft and apparitions, which equally diſgrace the journals and the magazines, is no remedy for deiſm: and whatever Mr Weſley might have thought of their cogency, the deiſts will ſcarcely accept them for argument. Be they ever ſo true, they are not that mode of proof which is proper in this caſe: for to thoſe, who are believers in revelation, they are unneceſſary; and thoſe who deny the ſcriptures, are pre-determined to reject them. "If they believe not Moſes and the prophets, neither will they be perſuaded, though one roſe from the dead."

Mr Weſley, with many excellencies, had alſo his ſingularities. In this claſs, we reckon his exceſſive attachment to particular opinions. Like many polem-

ics, who contend for victory, rather than truth, he paid little attention, and gave little weight to arguments, which combated his peculiar ſentiments. Frequently, he refuſed them a hearing. Hence, when any thing was propoſed, which he diſapproved, or any attempt made to go into a debate on his favourite doctrines, it was common with him to begin a ſtory, or to give out a hymn, and put an end to the converſation. It is ſaid, every man has his hobby-horſe. Mr Weſley's was perfection: and he rode it ſufficiently. For many years, it was the Shibboleth of methodiſm. He ſhewed the moſt marked attention to thoſe who profeſſed, and an equal coldneſs to thoſe who oppoſed it. Perfectioniſts and Anti-perfectioniſts were the grand diviſions of methodiſm. The wags laughed merrily at the witneſſes of perfection. Even

their brethren, in the ſocieties, "eyed them aſkance," and ſet a mark upon them: while the Calvinian methodiſts, in ſongs and madrigals, and heroics, alternately vented their mirth and their indignation.

A conſiderable defect in Mr Weſley, is what we would call his ſuperſtition. Of this ſomething has been hinted already. Another inſtance, is his notion of drawing lots. We cannot ſuppreſs a ſmile, at his enumeration of the good effects of his voyage to America. One of theſe, is the uſe of the lot. This cuſtom he borrowed from the moravians, and, in dubious caſes, frequently adopted it. This is one thing in which Mr Whitefield and he differed: and it was in conſequence of drawing lots, to determine whether he ſhould write againſt predeſtination, that the Calviniſts char-

ged him with drawing lots for his creed.'

From the munificence of Mr Wesley, it might be supposed, that he was a man of much softness and sensibility. And yet this does not appear to have been the case. His charities rather seem to have been the result of a sense of duty, than of any peculiar tenderness of nature. He had no attachments, so far as we have been able to discover, that partook of the genius of friendship. His regard for some individuals, proceeded less from personal, than public considerations. All his views were of this kind. His first object, was the success of methodism: and, as he never doubted, that the plans he had formed, were the best that could be devised; so, when any of the preachers were of a different opinion, and refused to concur in his measures, he treated them as the mariners

treated Jonah. He threw them overboard with the moſt perfect indifference: or, to borrow his own phraſeology, he "commended them to God."

This diſpoſition, whether it be called apathy, or firmneſs, or by whatever other name, was not peculiar to Mr Weſley. Many great men, eſpecially in the political world, have piqued themſelves upon it. Perhaps they think it neceſſary, that public characters ſhould be ſuperior to the ſenſations of common life. How far this may be true, we ſhall not attempt to determine: but we thank God, that we have never had any temptation to adopt the principle.

Mr Weſley was, in ſome reſpects, a man of penetration. In one, he certainly was not. His choice of confidents and favourites, did little honour to his ſagacity. Whatever knowledge he might

have had of the general motives and principles of human nature, he does not ſeem to have been happy in penetrating into the views and characters of individuals. Like other ſovereigns, he was ſurrounded by flatterers; and like them too, he often miſtook the incenſe of adulation, for the cordial offering of ſincerity and truth. Frequently he forgot, that, wherever power is lodged, all who have any thing to hope, and are not too ſpirited and independent to fear, will croud the levee. The conſequence, in his caſe, was much the ſame, as in all others. When ſuch perſons inſinuated themſelves into his good graces, the point was effectually to prejudice him againſt thoſe, who were formidable, by their wiſdom and integrity: and, in many inſtances, they ſucceeded.

We now come to the laſt feature in Mr Weſley's character; his love of power. He has been often charged with this propenſity; and the charge is not yet refuted. We will ſay more. We challenge any man to refute it.

Something of this has been intimated before: but as it is a matter of ſome conſequence, and a capital blemiſh in a character, in other reſpects eſtimable, it is neceſſary to eſtabliſh it by a candid appeal to facts. It is eaſy to accuſe; and it is equally ſo to deny: but a ſeries of plain facts, are ſuch decided proofs of the diſpoſition of the agent, that it is impoſſible to miſtake them.

The power, for which Mr Weſley contended, was abſolute. It was a power to receive or exclude preachers or people; to call a conference, to appoint the preachers, who ſhould attend it, and, in

general, to do what he pleaſed, by his own proper authority. There is no trace of ſuch a power in the firſt minutes of conference, in 1744. By thoſe minutes, equal liberty was eſtabliſhed, as a fundamental article: and, in a ſubſequent conference, Mr Weſley and the preachers mutually "ſigned an agreement, not to act independently of each other." As the minute, we have juſt mentioned, is remarkable for it's good ſenſe and liberality, we tranſcribe the paſſage.

"Queſtion. How far does each agree to ſubmit to the judgment of the majority?

"Anſwer. In ſpeculative things, each can only ſubmit ſo far as his judgment ſhall be convinced: in every practical point, each will ſubmit ſo far as he can, without wounding his conſcience.

"Queſtion. Can a chriſtian ſubmit

any farther than this, to any man, or number of men upon earth?

"Anſwer. It is plain he cannot, either to biſhop, or convocation, or general council. And this is that grand principle of private judgment, on which all the reformers proceeded: "every man muſt judge for himſelf; becauſe every man muſt give an account of himſelf unto God."

In this quotation, which we call the *original compact* between the preachers and Mr Weſley, it is remarkable, that the firſt queſtion ſuppoſes the ſubmiſſion of every preacher, and that only ſo far as is conſiſtent with a good conſcience, not to him individually, but to the majority. Moſt of the *ex poſt facto* laws, which he eſtabliſhed, or endeavoured to eſtabliſh in the ſequel, were ſo many violations of this compact. It was violated by his introduction of his notes on the New Teſt-

ament and his volumes of ſermons into the deeds of the preaching houſes, as the teſt of ſound doctrine, and the rule, on their conformity to which, ſhould depend the admiſſion or continuance of preachers in the connexion. It was violated by the requiſition, that the preachers ſhould promiſe to ſerve him "as ſons in the goſpel," and that they ſhould read ſuch books only as he recommended. It was ſtill farther violated, by his making it a rule, that they ſhould print no books without his permiſſion: and laſtly by the arbitrary ſelection of one hundred preachers as the only members of conference, and by the razure of the compact itſelf, from the minutes of conference, on their republication in 1780.

Againſt this laſt act, one preacher having remonſtrated, was anſwered; "I have not made ſo bad a uſe of my pow-

er, as to render this clauſe neceſſary:" to which it was very properly returned, "I had rather hold my liberties by the law, than by the favour of any man." A motion was made, that the minute concerning the right of private judgment, ſhould be reinſerted in it's proper place. It was voted in without one diſſentient voice: but he took care not to inſert it, to the day of his death. To this it may be added, that, at the conference in 1783, Dr Coke attempted, in his name, to introduce a minute, ſignifying the concurrence of conference, to Mr Weſley's giving *abſolute* power to a *ſelect committee*, to conduct the affairs of the ſocieties, after his deceaſe; and another, to call for the deeds of the ſeveral preaching houſes, out of the hands of the truſtees, and to lodge them in an iron ſafe, under the New Chapel, City Road; of

which safe, the Doctor kept the key! In both these, he was outvoted by a very large majority.

Such are the principles, on which we ground the assertion, that Mr Wesley was fond of power, and that his temper was despotic. When any man attempts the subversion of customs and regulations, as much distinguished by their excellence as their antiquity, it is a natural conclusion, that he is fond of absolute rule, and would substitute others instead of them, less excellent and unexceptionable: and in this case, whoever that man may be, he ought to be opposed in the attempt. In such a contest, he may, if he pleases, brand opposition with the name of rebellion: but we say, it is virtue.

On the authority of the above facts, (and if more were necessary, we can easily produce them) as well as upon the

ſanction of ſome perſonal knowledge of the man, we muſt inſiſt, that Mr Weſley was, during the laſt ten or fifteen years of his ſupremacy, the moſt abſolute of monarchs. His will was the law. If he ever receded from a reſolution, or reſcinded a favourite meaſure, it was not choice, but neceſſity. If he retreated, it was only for the moment. He never thought his authority ſecure, but when exerted to the utmoſt: and therefore, if ever ſurpriſed into a conceſſion, he took the firſt opportunity of meaſuring his ſteps back again; and, by frequently returning to the attack, he was ſure, ſooner or later, to carry his point. In a word, the love of power was the chief miſery of his life; the ſource of infinite diſguſts; and the moſt frequent cauſe of the defections of his friends. Had not his virtues been ſullied by this and ſome other

defects, he had avoided many errors and inconſiſtencies, into which he has fallen; and we ſhould have given him, without deduction or reſerve, the praiſe, to which his piety, his labours, his learning, and his general ability in the management of his people, had ſo juſtly entitled him.

CHAP. X.

His last Sickness and Death.

THE death of Mr Wesley, like that of his brother Charles, was one of those rare instances, in which nature, drooping under the load of years, sinks into the grave, by a gentle decay. Within the last three years, it was particularly visible, in the gradual extinction of memory, a faculty he once possessed in the greatest perfection, and in a general diminution of the vigour and activity he so long enjoyed. His labours however suffered little interruption: and when the summons came, it found him still occupied in his Master's work.

On Thurſday, the 17th of February, 1791, he preached at Lambeth, when on his return home, he ſeemed much indiſpoſed, and ſuppoſed he had taken cold. The next day, he preached at Chelſea, with ſome difficulty; and, in the evening, had a high degree of fever. On Saturday, he read and wrote as uſual; dined at Iſlington, and deſired a friend to read to him, from the fourth to the ſeventh chapter of Job. On Sunday, being quite unequal to his uſual employments, he was obliged to keep his room. He ſlept ſeveral hours in the courſe of the day. Two of his own diſcourſes, on the ſermon on the mount, were read to him; and in the evening he came down to ſupper. On Monday, he was ſomething better, and paid a viſit to a friend at Twickenham. On Tueſday, preached at the City Road, and on Wedneſday, at Lea-

therhead, delivered his laſt ſermon, from "Seek ye the Lord, while he may be found; call upon him, while he is near." On Thurſday, he paid a viſit to a family at Balaam; from whence he returned, extremely ill. His friends were ſtruck with the manner of his getting out of the carriage, and ſtill more, when he went up ſtairs, and ſat down in his chair. He ſent every one out of the room, and deſired not to be interrupted by any one for half an hour. When that time was expired, ſome mulled wine was brought him, of which he drank a little. In a few minutes he threw it up, and ſaid, "I muſt lie down." Dr Whitehead being ſent for, on his entering the room, he ſaid, "Doctor, they are more afraid, than hurt." Moſt of this day he lay in bed, with a quick pulſe, and a conſiderable degree of fever and ſtupor. On

Saturday, he was much in the ſame ſtate; but on Sunday morning, he ſeemed better, got up, and took a cup of tea. Sitting in his chair, he repeated thoſe words of his brother Charles,

> Till glad I lay this body down,
> Thy ſervant, Lord attend;
> And O! my life of mercy crown
> With a triumphant end!

Preſently, he prophetically exclaimed, "Our friend Lazarus ſleepeth." Converſing with ſome perſons, who then entered the room, he was fatigued with the exertion, and obliged to lie down. After lying ſome time quiet, he looked up, and ſaid, "ſpeak to me, I cannot ſpeak:" and ſeveral kneeling down to pray with him, his hearty amen ſhewed that he was perfectly ſenſible of what was ſaid. Some time after, he ſaid, "there is no need of

more. When at Briſtol (alluding to an illneſs in 1783) my words were,

I the chief of ſinners am,
But Jeſus died for me!"

He then queſtioned his niece, Miſs Weſley, concerning early riſing. His head now began to be a little affected; and during the delirium, he fancied himſelf going to preach, or to meet the claſſes, or engaged in ſome or other of his uſual employments. Sitting towards the evening in his chair, he ſaid, "what are all the pretty things at Balaam to a dying man?" And again he repeated the lines cited above.

On Monday the 28th, the phyſician and his friends being deſirous another ſhould be called in, he refuſed, ſaying, "Dr Whitehead knows my conſtitution better than any one. I am perfectly ſa-

tisfied; and will not have any one elſe." Moſt of this day, he ſlept and ſpoke but little. Once he ſaid, in a low but diſtinct manner, "there is no way into the holieſt, but by the blood of Jeſus." This was a reſtleſs night. It is remarkable, that during his illneſs, he never complained of pain, but once; when he ſaid, that he felt a pain in his left breaſt, when he drew his breath. In the morning he began, and ſang two verſes of a hymn. Lying ſtill, as if to recover ſtrength, he called for pen and ink; but when it was brought, he could not write. Soon after, he ſaid again, "I want to write." Paper being ſet before him, and a pen put into his hand, he ſaid, "I cannot." A perſon ſaid, "let me write for you, Sir. Tell me what you would ſay." Nothing, replied he, "but that God is with us." In the forenoon, he ſaid, "I will

get up:" and while they were preparing his clothes, he broke out, in a manner that aſtoniſhed all who were about him, in ſinging,

"I'll praiſe my Maker while I've breath,
And when my voice is loſt in death;
Praiſe ſhall employ my nobler powers:
My days of praiſe ſhall ne'er be paſt,
While life, and thought, and being laſt,
Or immortality endures.

Being aſked, whether he deſired, in caſe of his removal, that any or all the preachers ſhould be convened, he anſwered, "no, by no means; let all things remain as concluded at the laſt conference." Soon after, he was obſerved to change for death. He broke out into prayer, and then began to ſing. His voice now beginning to fail, he gaſped for breath, and ſaid, "now we have done all. Let us all go." He was now laid

on the bed, from which he roſe no more. After ſome time, he called to thoſe who were with him, to "pray and praiſe." He ſpoke to a friend concerning the key and contents of his bureau; and ſaid, "I would have all things ready for my executors." Here his voice failed again; but, taking breath, he added, "let me be buried in nothing but what is woollen; and let my corpſe be carried in my coffin into the chapel." He then called upon them to "pray and praiſe," and, took each by the hand, and affectionately ſaluting them, bade them farewell. Attempting ſoon after to give ſome farther directions, he was incapable of doing it; but raſing his arm, he ſaid, "the beſt of all is, God is with us." Something being given him to wet his lips, he ſaid, "it will not do; we muſt take the conſequence. Never mind the poor carcaſe."

Two or three ſtanding near the bed, and his ſight now nearly gone, he aſked, "who are theſe?" Being told, his brother's widow was come, he ſaid, "he giveth his ſervants reſt;" thanked her, as ſhe preſſed his hand, and endeavoured to kiſs her. His lips being again wet, he repeated his uſual grace; "we thank thee, O Lord, for theſe and all thy mercies; bleſs the church and king, and grant us truth and peace, through Chriſt our Lord." After ſome pauſe, he ſaid, "the clouds drop fatneſs. The Lord is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge." He then again called them to prayer, and repeated amen to their petitions.

Moſt of the following night, he often attempted to repeat the pſalm he had ſung before; but could only get out, "I'll praiſe, I'll praiſe." On Wedneſday

morning, his end drew near. His old friend, Mr Bradford, who, with the affection of a ſon, had attended him for many years, now prayed with him; and the laſt word he was heard to articulate, was "farewell." On this morning, the ſecond day of March 1791, a few minutes before ten, while a number of friends were kneeling around his bed, he expired without a groan. Thus ended the uſeful, laborious life of Mr Weſley.

The death of this good man, for ſuch he certainly was, was an admirable cloſe of ſo aſtoniſhing a ſcene of pious and induſtrious zeal. Having taken ſo large a view of his character, and laid ſuch a variety of facts before the public, we decline ſumming up the evidence, or compreſſing into narrower limits, the ſubſtance of the preceding obſervations. But, by way of compenſation, we preſent

our readers with two ſketches; the firſt of which, though drawn with the warm colouring of a friend, and conſequently a little overcharged, is upon the whole, no bad likeneſs of a man, who will be conſidered by poſterity, as one of the moſt diſtinguiſhed characters of the eighteenth century.

This was written by a phyſician, ſome years ago, on a premature report of his death: who, we hope, will have the goodneſs to excuſe ſome few alterations we thought it neceſſary to make.

"Now that Mr John Weſley has finiſhed his courſe upon earth, I may be allowed to eſtimate his character, and the loſs the world has ſuſtained by his death. Upon a fair account, it appears to be ſuch, as not only annihilates all the reproaches that have been caſt upon him; but ſuch as does honour to mankind, at

the ſame time that it reproaches them. His natural and acquired abilities were both of the higheſt rank. His apprehenſion was lively and diſtinct; his learning extenſive. His judgment, though not infallible, was in moſt caſes excellent. His mind was ſtedfaſt and reſolved. His elocution was ready and clear, graceful and eaſy, accurate and unaffected. As a writer, his ſtyle, though unſtudied and flowing with natural eaſe, yet for accuracy and perſpicuity, was ſuch, as may vie with the beſt writers in the Engliſh language. Though his temper was naturally warm, his manners were gentle, ſimple, and uniform. Never were ſuch happy talents better ſeconded by an unrelenting perſeverance in thoſe courſes, which his ſingular endowments, and his zealous love to the intereſts of mankind marked out for him. His conſtitution

was excellent: and never was a conſtitution leſs abuſed, leſs ſpared, or more excellently applied, in an exact ſubſervience to the faculties of his mind. His labours and ſtudies were wonderful. The latter were not confined to theology only, but extended to every ſubject that tended, either to the improvement or the rational entertainment of the mind. If we conſider the reading he diſcovers by itſelf, his writings and his other labours by themſelves, any one of them will appear ſufficient to have kept a perſon, of ordinary application, buſy during his whole life. In ſhort, the tranſactions of his life could never have been performed, without the utmoſt exertion of two qualities, which depended, not upon his capacity, but on the uniform ſtedfaſtneſs of his reſolution. Theſe were inflexible temperance, and an unexampled œcono-

my of time. In theſe he was a pattern to the age he lived in; and an example, to what a ſurpriſing extent a man may render himſelf uſeful in his generation, by temperance and punctuality. His friends and followers have no reaſon to be aſhamed of the name of Methodiſt, he has entailed upon them: as, for an uninterrupted courſe of years, he has given the world an inſtance of the poſſibility of living, without waſting a ſingle hour; and of the advantage of a regular diſtribution of time, in diſcharging the important duties and purpoſes of life. Few ages have more needed ſuch a public teſtimony to the value of time; and perhaps none have had a more conſpicuous example of the perfection, to which the improvement of it may be carried.

"As a miniſter, his labours were unparalleled, and ſuch as nothing could

have ſupported him under, but the warmeſt zeal for the doctrine he taught, and for the eternal intereſts of mankind. He ſtudied to be gentle, yet vigilant and faithful towards all. He poſſeſſed himſelf in patience, and preſerved himſelf unprovoked, nay, even unruffled in the midſt of perſecution, reproach, and all manner of abuſe, both of his perſon and name. But let his own works praiſe him. He now enjoys the fruit of his labours, and that praiſe, which he ſought, not of men, but of God.

"To finiſh the portrait. Examine the general tenor of his life, and it will be found ſelf-evidently inconſiſtent with the imputation of his being a ſlave to one paſſion or purſuit, that can fix a blemiſh upon his character. Of what uſe were the accumulation of wealth to him, who, through his whole courſe, never allowed

himſelf to taſte the repoſe of indolence, or even of common indulgence in the uſe of the neceſſaries of life? Free from the partiality of any party, the ſketcher of this excellent character, with a friendly tear, pays it as a juſt tribute to the memory of ſo great and good a man, who, when alive, was his friend."

The other is a ſlighter ſketch; but ſo far as it goes, ſufficiently accurate: and we flatter ourſelves, that the judicious reader will conſider it, if not a perfect, yet a beautiful picture of this extraordinary perſon.

"Very lately, I had an opportunity, for ſome days together, of obſerving Mr Weſley with attention. I endeavoured to conſider him, not ſo much with the eye of a friend, as with the impartiality of a philoſopher; and I muſt declare, every hour I ſpent in his company, af-

forded me freſh reaſons of eſteem and veneration. So fine an old man I never ſaw. The happineſs of his mind beamed forth in his countenance. Every look ſhewed how fully he enjoyed the gay conſcience of a life well ſpent; and wherever he went, he diffuſed a portion of his own felicity. Eaſy and affable in his demeanour, he accommodated himſelf to every ſort of company, and ſhewed how happily the moſt finiſhed courteſy may be blended with the moſt fervent piety. In his converſation we might be at a loſs whether to admire moſt, his fine claſſical taſte, his extenſive knowledge of men and things, or his overflowing goodneſs of heart. While the grave and ſerious were charmed with his wiſdom, his ſportive ſallies of innocent mirth delighted even the young and thoughtleſs; and

both saw, in his uninterrupted chearfulness, the excellency of true religion. No cynical remarks on the levity of youth embittered his discourse. No applausive retrospect to past times marked his present discontent. In him, even old age appeared delightful, like an evening without a cloud; and it was impossible to observe him, without wishing fervently, "may my last end be like his!"

"But I find myself unequal to the task of delineating such a character. What I have said, may appear to some as panegyric; but there are numbers, and those of taste and discernment too, who can bear witness to the truth, though by no means to the perfectness of the sketch I have attempted. With such I have been frequently in his company; and every one of them, I am persuaded, would

ſubſcribe to all I have ſaid. For my own part, I never was ſo happy, as while with him, and ſcarcely ever felt more poignant regret, than at the parting from him; for I well knew, "I never ſhould look upon his like again."

If, in the courſe of theſe memoirs, we have ſometimes commended, and ſometimes cenſured, we have endeavoured to do it with impartiality. We have intended, not a novel, but a hiſtory: and therefore, though we have deſcribed Mr Weſley, as a man of great virtues and abilities, we have not conſidered him as a perfect character. The above ſketches take in only the brighter and more amiable features. Like ſome portraits of Elizabeth, they are all light, and no ſhade. But without the latter, the picture were imperfect. This defect we have endeavoured to avoid: and Mr Weſley is

accordingly repreſented as a man of great zeal for religion, of indefatigable labours, of much benevolence, and, in general, a moſt able leader of a party: but, on the other hand, it is ſhewn, that he was ſubject to ſome frailties, which prove, that, though a great and excellent perſon, he was not ſuperior to the imperfections common to mankind.

Such a ſubject could not be treated with the freedom of hiſtorical diſcuſſion, without giving offence. We are ſorry that it is ſo. We were aware of it from the beginning; and can only ſay, the intention was not to offend, but merely to do juſtice to the ſubject, by telling the truth; and that, ſo far only, as appeared neceſſary. In ſome inſtances, we have leaned to the ſide of extenuation; but hope we have not exaggerated in any thing.

To ſhew that Mr Weſley has kept his word with the public, and was in fact as free from any diſpoſition to the accumulation of wealth, and the aggrandizement of his family, as he profeſſed, we ſubjoin a copy of his will.—Of the future ſtate of methodiſm, we ſhall ſay nothing at preſent. In this matter, almoſt every thing will depend on the reſolutions of the enſuing conference.

FINIS

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

OF THE

Rev. JOHN WESLEY, A. M.

In the Name of God, Amen!

I JOHN WESLEY, Clerk, ſometime Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, revoking all others, appoint this to be my laſt Will and Teſtament.

I give all my Books now on ſale, and the copies of them (only ſubject to a rent charge of 85l. a year to the widow and children of my Brother) to my faithful friends, John Horton, Merchant, George Wolff, Merchant and William Marriott, Stock-broker, all of London, in truſt for the general Fund of the Methodiſt Conference in carrying on the work of God, by Itinerant Preachers, on condition that they permit the following Committee, Thomas Coke, James Creighton, Peard Dickinſon, Thomas Rankin, George Whitfield, and the London Aſſiſtant for the time being, ſtill to ſuperintend the Printing Preſs, and to employ Hannah Paramore and George Paramore as heretofore, unleſs four of the Committee judge a change to be needful *.

* Since the death of the Rev. Mr Weſley, a

I give the Books, Furniture, and whatever elſe belongs to me in the three houſes at Kingſwood in truſt to Thomas Coke, Alexander Mather, and Henry Moore, to be ſtill employed in teaching and maintaining the children of poor travelling Preachers. †

I give to Thomas Coke, Dr John Whitehead,

Deed bearing date Oct. 5. 1790, and executed by him before two witneſſes hath appeared, wherein he gives all theſe books, ſtock in trade, &c. to Thomas Coke, Alexander Mather, Peard Dickinſon, John Valton, James Rogers, Joſeph Taylor, and Adam Clarke, in TRUST for carrying on the Work of God, by Itinerant Preachers; ſubject to the rent-charge above mentioned, or the principal ſum, with all debts and legacies ſpecified in the Will.

N. B. The intention of this Deed, with reſpect to the application of the produce of the books, &c. is exactly the ſame as expreſſed in the Will: and the Executors and Truſtees are perfectly agreed, and reſolved to act in concert in fulfilling the deſire of the deceaſed.

† There is alſo a Deed of Leaſe and releaſe executed by Mr Weſley on the 25th of February, 1786, whereby he grants, bargains and ſells unto Thomas Coke, Alexander Mather, and James Rogers, all his right, title, eſtate, &c. to the School at Kingſwood and the Premiſes there, with the furniture, books, &c. for the ſame uſe as is declared in the Will, concerning the books and furniture.

and Henry Moore all the Books which are in my Study and Bedchamber at London, and in my Studies elſewhere, in truſt for the uſe of the Preachers who ſhall labour there from time to time.

I give the Coins, and whatever elſe is found in the drawer of my Bureau at London, to my dear grand daughters Mary and Jane Smith.

I give all my Manuſcripts to Thomas Coke, Dr Whitehead, and Henry Moore, to be burnt or publiſhed as they ſee good.

I give whatever Money remains in my Bureau and Pockets at my deceaſe to be equally divided between Thomas Briſcoe, William Collins, John Eaſton, and Iſaac Brown.

I deſire my Gowns, Caſſocks, Saſhes, and Bands, may remain at the Chapel for the uſe of the Clergymen attending there.

I deſire the London Aſſiſtant for the time being to divide the reſt of my wearing apparel between thoſe four of the travelling Preachers that want it moſt; only my Pelliſe I give to the Rev. Mr Creighton: my Watch to my friend Joſeph Bradford: my Gold Seal to Eliz. Ritchie.

I give my Chaiſe and Horſes to James Ward and Charles Wheeler, in truſt, to be ſold, and the money to be divided, one half to Hannah Abbott, and the other to the poor members of the Select Society.

Out of the firſt money which ariſes from the ſale of Books, I bequeath to my dear ſiſter Martha Hall (if alive) 40l. to Mr Creighton aforeſaid 40l. and to the Rev. Mr Heath 60l.

And whereas I am empowered by a late Deed to name the perſons who are to preach in the New

Chapel at London (the Clergymen for a continuance) and by another Deed to name a Committee for appointing Preachers in the New Chapel at Bath, I do hereby appoint John Richardſon, Thomas Coke, James Creighton, Peard Dickinſon, Clerks, Alexander Mather, William Thompſon, Henry Moore, Andrew Blair, John Valton, Joſeph Bradford, James Rogers, and William Myles, to preach in the New Chapel at London, and to be the Committee for appointing Preachers in the New Chapel at Bath.

I likewiſe appoint Henry Brooke, Painter, Arthur Keen, Gent. and William Whiteſtone, Stationer, all of Dublin, to receive the annuity of 5l. (Engliſh) left to Kingſwood School by the late Roger Shiel, Eſq;

I give 6l. to be divided among the ſix poor men, named by the Aſſiſtant, who ſhall carry my Body to the grave; for I particularly deſire there may be no hearſe, no coach, no eſcutcheon, no pomp, except the tears of them that loved me, and are following me to Abraham's boſom. I ſolemnly adjure my Executors in the name of God, punctually to obſerve this.

Laſtly, I give to each of thoſe travelling Preachers who ſhall remain in the Connection ſix months after my deceaſe, as a little token of my love, the eight Volumes of Sermons.

I appoint John Horton, George Wolff, and William Marriott, aforeſaid, to be Executors of this my laſt Will and Teſtament, for which trouble they will receive no recompence till the Reſurrection of the Juſt.

Witneſs my hand and ſeal the 20th day of February, 1789.

JOHN WESLEY. (ſeal.)

Signed, ſealed, and delivered, by the ſaid Teſtator as and for his laſt Will and Teſtament, in the preſence of us

WILLIAM CLULOW,
ELIZABETH CLULOW.

Should there be any part of my perſonal Eſtate undiſpoſed of by this my Will: I give the ſame unto my two Nieces E. Elliſon, and S. Collet, equally.

JOHN WESLEY.

WILLIAM CLULOW.
ELIZABETH CLULOW.

Feb. 25. 1789.

I give my Types, Printing-Preſſes, and every thing pertaining thereto to Mr Thomas Rankin, and Mr George Whitfield, in truſt for the uſe of the Conference.

JOHN WESLEY.

JOHN HORTON,
GEORGE WOLFF,
WILLIAM MARRIOTT, } Executors.

JOHN RICHARDSON,
JAMES CREIGHTON,
PEARD DICKINSON,
JAMES ROGERS,
JOHN BROADBENT,
DUNCAN WRIGHT,
THOMAS RANKIN,
JOSEPH BRADFORD,
GEORGE WHITFIELD.

ERRATA.

VOL I.

Page 8. l. 6. *read* call *shall*.
24. l. 12. *r. ardent* and exemplary.
ibid. l. 19. *r.* so *affecting*.
74. l. 6. *r.* as well for your paſt kindneſs, as for, &c.
134. l. 9. *r. from* which.
152. l. 1. *r. reaſoning*.
212. l. 4. *r.* influence of this *fire*.
220. l. 13. for immediately *r. intimately*.

VOL. II.

Between p. 64 and 65. ſupply the word *aſſurance*.
107. l. 6. for any *r. an*.

VOL. III.

Page 41. l. 3. *r.* love of applauſe.